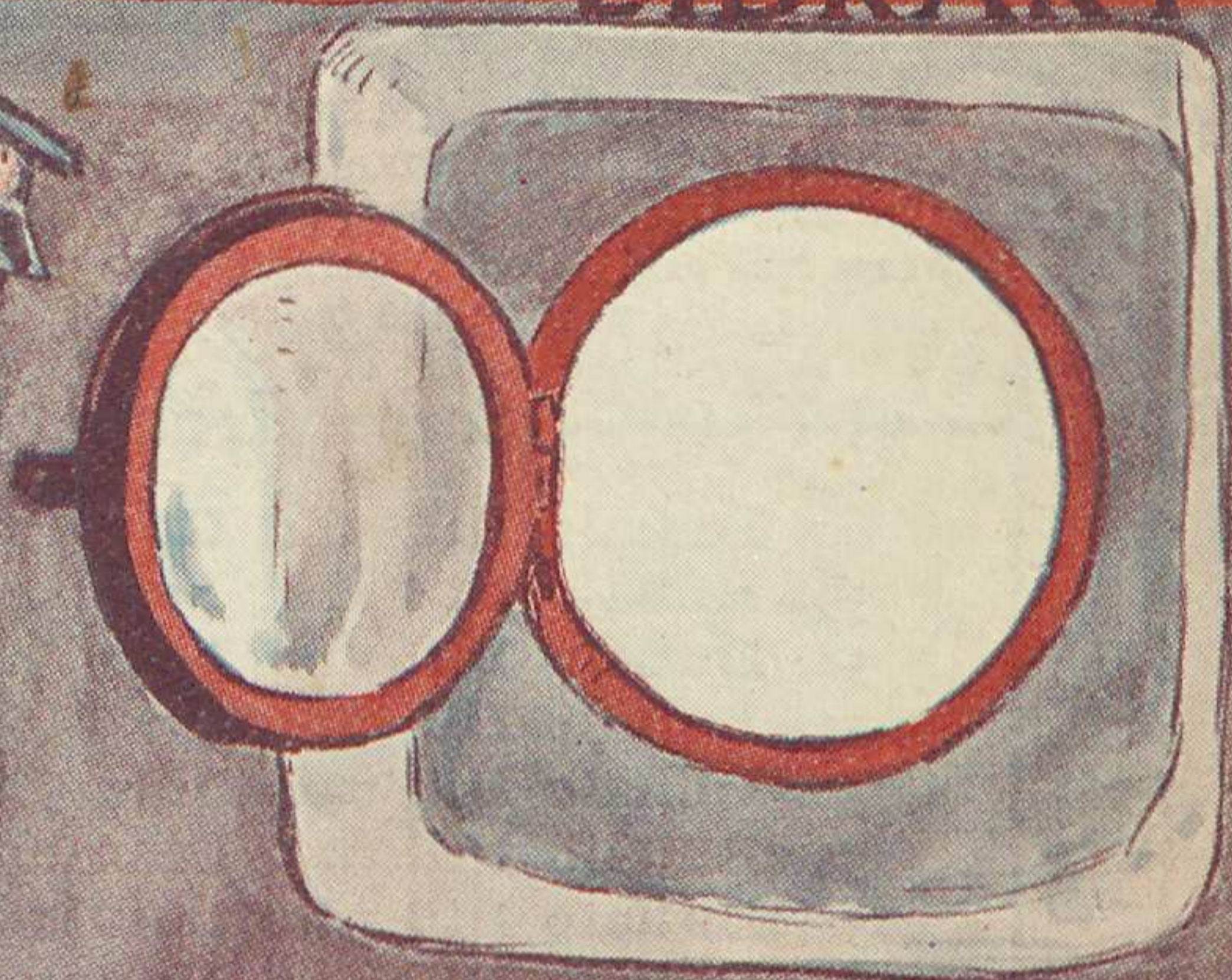


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JIM BLUDSOE'S TRIUMPH

CHAPTER I

THE MORGAN INHERITANCE

THE opening scene in this eventful drama in real life, occurs in the dingy room of one of the foremost characters—a dark, cheerless apartment on the third floor of a low tenement-house on Alaska Street in the Centennial City of Philadelphia. Alaska Street you must know is one of the two worst streets in the Keystone State metropolis, and is populated literally with the “scum of creation”; for here is the undisputable home of thieves, cracksmen and even murderers—a sort of headquarters of crime and vice.

Every well or ill-regulated city has its quarters of this kind, an eye-sore to the respectable and good-doing citizens.

In the room on the third floor of Mother Maginn's tenement, as the rackety old building was called, there was little that was attractive; poverty and careless neglect were so evident as to inspire the belief that it was the abode of some beggarly tramp, or bummer.

And yet the occupant of this domicile was neither a beggar nor a bummer—a youth, instead, whose age was probably seventeen, although the maturity of face and form would have pronounced him older by three or four years. In form he was muscular, symmetrical and graceful, and of about the medium height of men, his bodily development betraying that he was no stranger to healthy exercise. His compact, wiry form was clad in a threadbare suit of grey, with patches at the knees and elbows of contrasting colours, which the generosity of old Mother Maginn had kindly provided.

The face of the boy was one to study—a face that we do not often encounter, with shrewdness, cool courage, wit, strong

passions under excellent control, all expressed in it—a face with a fresh, healthy tint, and still a face that when drawn to sternness, produced a feeling of awe. And such was Sam Morgan, Bohemian, odd-jobber and youth of leisure, whom we propose to make the “hero” of this little romance.

Sam was perched upon the edge of the bed, as we have described him, picking the strings of an old banjo, and occasionally breaking out with a snatch of some popular song.

One verse in particular seemed to impress a sinister-faced man, who stood an unobserved spectator and listener, in the open doorway.

“Well done, boy!” he said, patronizingly. “Your voice should procure you a place on the stage.”

Sam looked up from his banjo, a change of expression coming over his features as he beheld the intruder—a thick-set, richly dressed individual of some three and thirty years, with a well-fattened face; almost brigandish it looked with the dark, grey-threaded hair, and heavy black moustache.

Dissipation had left deep marks upon his countenance, whose darkened hue was but a reflection from his nature.

“Arnold Chelton, you here?” the young tenant of the garret demanded. “I should have as soon expected a visit from Old Nick himself. To what do I owe this honour?”

“To what? Why to my desire to see to the welfare of my relatives and acquaintances, and you being a cousin, I could not pass you by without looking in upon you. How do you get along, boy?”

“How? Well, sometimes this way and sometimes that. I am at present Bohemianizing it—with as little nourishment as Mother Maginn can spare, after feeding sixteen little Maginns.”

"I confess I am surprised that you still hold your head above water," Chelton said, accepting a seat, uninvited, and crossing his legs, while he blew a cloud of smoke toward a ceiling whose ebony hue suggested a needed application of the white-wash brush. "I failed to see how you could exist, after getting suspended from employment at Wanamaker's——"

"Through your instrumentality, my liege lord!" Morgan replied, with biting sarcasm. "But, it is a saying that 'a toad is not always killed when stepped on'—which applies to my case."

The other smothered an imprecation.

"I had nothing to do with your discharge!" he growled, twisting the ends of his moustache. "You stole money, and it was only through Wanamaker's leniency that you escaped a term in Moyamensing prison, which you deserved."

"You're a liar!" Sam cried, coolly, although he was very much angered. "It was all a conspiracy on your part with one of the foremen, to have me ousted. But, never mind, Arnold Chelton; a day of reckoning is in store between you and me, yet. I am a boy in years, but as Nobles says in the *Phoenix*: 'I've an eye as keen and an arm as strong as the man I have to grapple with.' You'll find you have a *man* to fight, in me, even though it will take four years to bring me to twenty-one. Yesterday I was seventeen, and I celebrated the event by four hours' practice at the gymnasium, and lager beer at Tony's around the corner. A gay time we Bohemians have."

"And, now, Arnold Chelton, since you have honoured me with a visit, let us come to a permanent understanding."

"Exactly!" the elder assented, extending a case of fragrant cigars. "Smoke?"

"No, thank you. I never smoke in the presence of greater villains than myself. Now, to business. I understand that my uncle, and yours, is about to resign his claims upon this life, when one or the other of us must become the possessor of his wealth?"

"I believe that is the decision of the medical fraternity," Chelton acknowledged, graciously; "and so it again turns out that we are rivals—in fortune as in love."

"Correct! Rivals, and each has an equal show. I think my chance is about as good as yours—more so, if you do not instil poison into my uncle's mind, as you did into that of Louise Lester."

"Your opinion of me is not very exalted, it appears!" Chelton sneered, a flush of anger dyeing his dark features.

"No, not above par," Sam declared, with

a cool laugh. "We villains are not given to compliments, you know, strange as it may seem."

"Humph! class yourself with villains," Chelton retorted. "I am a gentleman."

"Oh! you *are*? Since when, pray?"

"Always, boy. I dare you to say you ever knew the time when I was not a gentleman, sir!"

"Ha! ha!" and the young Bohemian laughed, tantalizingly. "Arnold Chelton, gentleman and gambler! That sounds well enough among such as you associate with, but not down here in Alaska Street. Don't dare me to do anything, beloved cousin. It's dangerous! Any one from the Delaware to Mantua will tell you who Sam Morgan is."

"I don't need to inquire; nor did I come here to compromise. I came to *make* you promise not to interfere in this inheritance business, until after Jacob Morgan has shuffled off this mortal coil."

Sam Morgan stared straight at the man to whom he was unhappily related, thrumming on the old banjo in the meantime.

"You came to *make* me?" he repeated reflectively.

"I came to make you. See here," and the villain drew a paper from his pocket. "This is a warrant for your arrest for burglary. You were in Jacob Morgan's house, last evening, and were seen to leave, by way of a window, after failing to attain some unknown object. Three persons saw you, one of the three being your faithful, loving cousin—myself. I have but to place this document in the hands of the nearest police officer, to insure you a ride in the van to the Central, and then to Moyamensing!"

"Go on and order my arrest. Send me to the county prison, if you like!" young Morgan said, coolly. "While there, I shall write a sensation-book about the sudden death of Carrie Moore at the Sherman House!"

The effect of the words were electrical. Chelton leaped to his feet, and staggered back, aghast, every particle of colour leaving his face.

"You—you——" he began.

"Know enough about the matter to hang you."

"I'll kill you!" the gambler foamed.

"Haven't the least doubt but you will try to, but that isn't saying you'll accomplish your aim. Arnold Chelton, we two cousins are taking hands in two games of cards—one for hearts and one for diamonds; but understand that I will match queens against your knaves. I am a boy, and you are a man. I am a Bohemian—you are a gambler. I am a loafer—you are a rascal."

Both are to contend for the Morgan inheritance; you will combine force with villainy; I will match cunning against villainy; and we will see who will come out the best."

"Thank you," Chelton sneered. "I see you are disposed to play this hand against me. I am not one to back out; still I have a proposal to make you."

"As I understand it, our uncle's property, real estate, bonds and ready cash, amounts to something like half a million. I'll give you fifty thousand if you will clear for Europe, and never come back."

"Which I decline!"

"Then we are to be enemies?"

"Enemies to the last!"

Chelton bowed, and left the young Bohemian's home.

CHAPTER II

THE RIVAL'S WOUND

ARNOLD CHELTON left the old tenement in Alaska Street, walked to Eleventh Street, where he had some business to transact; then jumped aboard the north-going cars, and rode until he was several squares north of Girard Avenue, when he disembarked and rang the bell of a large, respectable-looking house, standing out to the pavement, with a row of others.

He glanced himself over to see that his dress was faultless in every particular; then looked up with a pleasant smile illuminating his dark countenance, as a mulatto girl opened the door.

"Good-morning, Lydia," the gambler said, with a gracious bow. "Is your young mistress in?"

And he extended a perfumed card, which the girl received, and hurried away with, instead of inviting him into the parlour.

She presently returned, however, and ushered him into a handsomely-furnished reception-room.

Chelton, surrendering his hat and gloves to Lydia, sank into a seat, and at the sound of light footsteps upon the carpet, put on a smile of welcome for the vision of brightness, that came like a ray of spring sunshine into his presence.

"My dear Miss Lester!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet and grasping her shyly-extended hand, with warm pressure. "How delighted I am to see you once more! You are looking sweetly fresh and winning this morning."

And, indeed, she was lovely, in her airy

wrapper, with a bunch of roses at her throat, and another bunch in her soft, chestnut hair.

Her manner was free and unconventional; too much so, perhaps, but then she was a young thing yet, just verging on seventeen, an orphan heiress, and no one to obey but herself.

"You must excuse me, dear Miss Louise!" Chelton said, drawing her to a seat upon a luxurious sofa, near the window, "for calling upon you so soon, morning being a poor time for calls. But I am going to New York at twelve, and wanted to bid you good-bye."

"Indeed? I am glad you called. Do you intend to stay in New York?"

"I hardly know. Perhaps I shall, as there is nothing to keep me here, that I know of, unless it would be one thing. I have a few friends, but it is an old-established fact that the best of friends must part."

"Of course. But, no doubt, your friends would miss you, Mr. Chelton, I among the rest, as you have been a frequent visitor here since papa died."

"And a very interested visitor, too, dear friend. I am a man who has seen my share of the bright and dark sides of life; I have moved in the best social circles, and have seen many ladies noted for their wealth, beauty and personal worth. But, believe me, I have never found the idol of my heart, until——"

"Be careful, Mr. Chelton. Such words as are on your tongue should not be spoken in haste," the girl said, gravely. "They are words you may be sorry for in the future."

"Oh! no, Louise, dear; I shall never regret them. Let me out with it—let me tell you that I dearly love you, above all women on the face of this fair earth—that I worship you, blindly, passionately as man can love but once in a lifetime; as man never loved before."

He appeared deeply sincere, and it seemed as if the man's whole ardent soul found expression from his lips.

Louise Lester listened, with a grave, troubled look upon her face.

She listened, and gazed straight into his eyes, with a look that made him quail.

"Mr. Chelton, I have heard you through, and am flattered by your kind offer, but I am not at liberty to give you an answer yet," she said, in her sweet, grave way. "You probably know that you have a rival, who, though he has never told me he loved me, I have every reason to believe does. And I think a great deal of him. Mr. Chelton, does not the vision of Carrie Moore sometimes haunt your dreams?"

The man leaped to his feet as though he had been bitten by an adder. His face was deathly white, and a tigerish gleam in

his midnight orbs betrayed the fact that he was deeply enraged.

"He told you to say that, did he?" was his hoarse demand.

"He did, Mr. Chelton, and it appears that you have a skeleton in the closet!"

"Yes! yes!" he murmured, as though to himself, "so I have, but I'll burden my soul no longer. He swore he'd steal you away from me, but he shall not triumph. Louise, dear, I will tell you all, and I know you will not reproach me. I have been a man over whose life for the past two years a blight has hung. I have been fighting against remorse, my enemies, and the devil."

"Two years ago, I shot and killed this Carrie Moore by mistake. I was stopping at the Sherman House, in this city, and she was stopping at the same place. I paid her a few proper attentions, and she became infatuated. I then was forced to dismiss her, but that only made matters worse. One night, she procured entrance into my sleeping-apartment, with some unknown intention, and waking from a sound sleep and mistaking her for a burglar, I shot her through the heart! Oh! Louise, how bitterly I have repented that act; how I have prayed that it might all turn out to be a dream. But, such is fated not to be the case. The dead cannot be recalled to life!"

The man here broke down, and burying his face in his hands, he wept, his whole frame convulsed with his emotion.

"Do not grieve; I believe you," she said.

"You were not to blame. I like you all the better, then, for telling me."

"And you *do* like me—can you *love* me?" he questioned, brightening up, with an intense eagerness in his tone. "Oh, darling! only say that you do love me, and I shall be the happiest man in the city—the very happiest!"

And using all the arts of one skilled in dissembling—treating her with exquisite gentleness, and adoration expressed in word and look—what wonder the artless inexperienced girl was lured to forgetfulness of her love for another, and drifted almost unconsciously into the snare he had so cunningly laid to entrap her into a tacit engagement?

Two hours the gambler spent with his innocent prize, picturing the happy life in store for them; then he left, with an early wedding-day promised, perhaps happy as he had ever been in his life.

After his departure, Louise Lester sat for a long while in the reception room, her face buried in her white, jewelled hands, and her mind busied with thoughts of what had just passed.

"What have I done?" she asked of herself, over and over again. "Engaged myself to marry this man, who has fascinated me almost against my will? Ah! *do* I love him? Can I be contented and happy when—when Sam Morgan—Sam Morgan! What a name! Yet what a noble heart he has! Oh! I hope I shall not see him again—never, for it will make me regret the past. Ah! can it be that I regret my decision already?"

She arose and went to the piano that stood open at the farther side of the room. Seating herself, she ran her fingers lightly over the keys; then struck into a lively galop, producing strains delightful to the ear.

Suddenly she turned from the piano, with a faint exclamation of surprise, as the odour of cigar smoke reached her sensitive nostrils.

"Sam Morgan!" she exclaimed, as her eyes rested upon that very individual, who, ensconced upon the sofa, with a cigar between his pearly teeth, and his feet hoisted on top of a chair-back, was evidently hugely enjoying the surroundings and the music.

"Present!" the young Bohemian assented, with imperturbable coolness. "Generally am round about grub-time, you know."

"Are you hungry, Sam?" she asked.

"What if I am?" the youth demanded, quickly.

"Because I will get you a lunch."

"Oh! no you won't! Sam Morgan don't accept charity, if you please. I was just funning with you about the grub. I come here on different business."

"What business, Sam?"

"Well, that's rather a ticklish way to put it to a feller. You might 'a' sed, 'I'm all attention,' which would have been just as well."

"Well, 'I'm all attention,' then, if that is any better, Sam."

"That's more business-like. S'posin' you come and sit here on the sofa, Miss Louise."

"I'd rather not, Mr. Morgan."

"But I'd rather you would."

He arose, in his rather unpresentable garb, and went over and seized her by the wrist—gently but firmly.

"Come, Louise, you shall not trifle with me," he said; and, seeing that he was resolved, she followed him, and seated herself beside him on the sofa. But she trembled in every limb, for she could but guess what was coming.

"Louise!" the young Bohemian said, in a low tone, "I have come here to tell you that I love you, and ask you to take the name of Morgan in exchange for that of Lester. I am not going to give vent to

whole yards of nectar-impregnated effusions, like my cousin, a short time ago, nor am I going to get down on my knees before you. I offer you the love of a Bohemian. I offer myself, and you can accept or decline at your own option. I am poor—have just five cents on which to commence house-keeping; not a very entertaining prospect, I'm aware, but many a gal's begun on worse. To-morrow, Sam Morgan's going to launch forth into the world in a new strike, at which he can attain a reputation, ef he don't make a cent—and a young married couple ought to be able to exist on reputation and love, pretty well."

All this was said with that cool composure which was a marked characteristic of the youth.

Yet tears sprang into Louise's eyes, and she wept with her head bowed upon his shoulder; wept, from the very utmost depths of her young heart.

"You love me and will be mine?" the youth demanded, a tenderness in his voice that betrayed his deep emotion. "Oh! darling, say yes, and that you will break the engagement with Arnold Chelton!"

"No! no! I cannot!" she replied, hastily. "I shall marry him, Mr. Morgan, for I promised him in good faith. You should not have come."

"Maybe not!" he replied, "but I was in the hall, and overheard most of my cousin's wooing. I wish you the best of luck and a happy life with that man, Louise. He and I are enemies—bitter foes, with a fortune standing between us. I shall fight him till the game is dead. Again and again he may kill me, but, like the Phoenix, I shall each time rise from my ashes to continue the battle. Greek shall meet Greek. Farewell, Louise; may your happiness be supreme; may my love never haunt you, like a reproachful phantom!"

Then the young Bohemian had gone!

CHAPTER III

PLOTTING AGAINST TWO

ARNOLD CHELTON, after leaving the home of Louise Lester, his affianced wife, walked over to Tenth Street and took the southward cars as far as Chestnut Street, where he got off and walked through Philadelphia's Broadway of business and bustle.

Then he pushed rapidly through to Sixth Street, into which he turned and walked south to Walnut.

Ascending a pair of stairs leading to the third floor of a prominent brick row, he knocked at the door of a side room, and was hailed to come in, by some one from within, which he accordingly did.

Inside, the room was fitted up as an office, with leathern-bound furniture, desks, tables, and bookcases.

An air of comfort and cigar smoke pervaded the apartment, and a young man who had been poring over a volume of Blackstone, sprang to his feet and grasped Chelton's hand cordially.

"Glad to see you, pard," he said, with a laugh.

"I came to ask a favour of you, Heston," said Chelton.

"You see, I have got myself promised to a little damsel around here on Eleventh Street, and we propose to join our hearts and hands, sometime next week. But I do not care to be legally harnessed in with the second party of the transaction, for reasons best known to myself, you see; and I thought I might prevail upon you to fix yourself up as a clergyman, and come and tie a knot. As you have not yet been admitted to the bar, it would not be holding!"

"No, I suppose not," Heston said, drumming thoughtfully upon the table with his fingers. "Deuced mean drive to come over a respectable girl, though!"

"Bah! that's nothing. I've been in the harness twice before, in that shape. No harm at all. If the girl behaves herself properly, I shall never tell her the difference; but if she shows her teeth and becomes unruly, after the first year of honeymooning, I shall shove her off upon her own cheek."

"Humph! you are a worse villain than I took you to be, Chelton. Who is this victim?"

"Her name is Louise Lester."

"Louise Lester?"

"Yes; do you know her?"

"No; but she knows me, which would make it necessary for me to come in disguise."

"Immaterial to me about that. Come one week from to-night, at No. — North Eleventh Street, at 7 o'clock."

"Very well. Best leave a V as guarantee of good faith," the student reminded, as Chelton arose.

"Oh! certainly," and the gambler counted out three tens from a roll of bills. "There's a good round fee, and you can afford to do a fair job."

"And I will do a *fair* job!" Heston exclaimed, after the scheming villain had departed.

From the lawyer's office Chelton went to St. Mary's, south of Walnut Street, between Sixth and Seventh. This is the worst locality, without doubt, in the Centennial City. It is a narrow, filthy thoroughfare, bordered by old tumble-down tenements.

At last he found the number he was in search of, and gave a brisk rap upon the door. But no one appeared to answer the summons.

"Ha! ha!" he chuckled, "the old fox is still very shy, or else he is out. I will try the old rap."

He gave five light knocks upon the door, and one heavy thump; then, after a couple of minutes, a repetition. The result was soon proven by the cautious opening of the door.

The next moment Chelton was pulled inside the room and the door slammed shut and locked by a large muscular man, with a low-browed, sinister countenance, evil-gleaming black eyes, and long shaggy hair of the same hue.

"Still wary as ever, I see, Gueleppo!" Chelton said, with a light laugh, as he seated himself at a table, whereon were a bottle and glasses. "Don't lose any of your caution."

"No!" the ruffian growled, sullenly. "The cursed blue-coats are keeping a stricter watch on the street than usual, curse them; they're worse than ever since Stokely's mayor. Had things pretty soft in Fox's term."

"I presume so, though God forbid that the neighbourhood was any worse then than now."

"Do you want a case?"

"Do I? Well, I ain't purticklar. Have a few dates open, which I might fill to advantage. What's the lay?"

"An easy one, I should say, if I were engaged in the wholesale slaughtering business; a boy, aged seventeen."

"A boy, eh? Seventeen years old. Just the toughest age of lads to handle. What name is it?"

"Sam Morgan."

"The deuce you say! Sam Morgan is a cuss!" replied Gueleppo. "It will require a good deal of scheming to take him. He is secretly in favour with the detectives, I suspect. I must have your co-operation, if I undertake the case. How must he be disposed of—S. D.?"

"Of course—'sure death.' It must be sure, too. If it costs money, let it cost; I am willing to pay for his death!"

"Very well. I may strike upon a good plan soon."

"The sooner the better."

"Of course. Hold yourself to go to work with me at an instant's notice. It must be done in a way that will forever put suspicion off of our heads."

"Correct! You know my address?"

"I do, and will soon trouble you for a hundred dollars, no doubt."

"Which will be all right, if you only get rid of the boy," Chelton said, as he was shown out.

"Ha! ha!" he chuckled, as he made his way homeward; "this has been a day of days to me, and success stares me in the face, all around."

Sam Morgan left the Lester mansion in an unenviable frame of mind.

His rejection by the only girl he had ever cared for, in particular, was a bitter blow to him, but no more so than was the triumph of his evil-disposed cousin, Arnold Chelton.

"Chelton has won!" he mused, as he left the Lester mansion, and strode southward through the drizzling rain toward his quarters in Alaska Street—for he had no means wherewith to pay for a car ride. "He has won this point, and stands ten chances to my one of winning the other. Louise refused me, and by Heaven! no girl shall ever have that chance again. Henceforth the life of Sam Morgan, Bohemian, shall be changed—shall be devoted to the one sweet object after the death-blow to my love—revenge!"

He strode along, a moody expression upon his face, a bitter pain tugging at his heart.

He was a swift walker, and soon reached Market Street, the greatest business thoroughfare of the city.

In crossing to the south side, he came in contact with a young man of about his own age, dressed in the same shabby style. There was a bright look upon his face, though, proclaiming that he was the possessor of important news.

"Hello, Jack Jaunders!" cried Sam, grasping his hand, warmly. "What makes your face so beameriferous?"

"Because I've struck ile," was the reply, as Jaunders turned about and walked along with the other Bohemian. "There's an old covey inquiren' fer you: wants you to take charge of a steam yacht, an' run a pleasure excursion down the bay to-morrow for which you will get twenty dollars, spot cash, before startin'. Sed he heard yer ked handle a yacht, an' wanted just such a hand."

"Hurra! that is good news. Where's the ship fer sail?"

"At Prime Street wharf."

"All right. Tell the old feller I'll be

there at seven, sharp. Now, I've got some important bizness elsewhere."

Then, after a few more words, the two boys shook hands, and separated.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUCCESS OF VILLAINY

SAM MORGAN hurried along down Market Street to Eighth Street, and thence down Eighth to South, into which busy thoroughfare he turned, a stern expression upon his handsome face.

"I've got to do it," he muttered, as he pushed through the crowds who, despite the unfavourable character of the weather, were improving the most of their day in shopping upon the great "cheap" street of the city. "There is no help for it, and she gave it to me, too."

"I shall have to do it," he repeated, as he turned into a little low shop, over the door of which swung three golden-hued balls. It was the flourishing establishment of Isaac Isaacs, pawnbroker, in whose possession one might look with the expectation of finding anything sought in the line of manufactured goods.

"Goot-morning, Mr. Samuel!" he saluted, with a gracious bow. "Nice day out mit de rain, vere de beoples was so plenty, eh?"

"A confounded disagreeable day, I should say," Sam replied, with a sigh—"dubiously blue, when a fellow's out of rocks. What value will you put upon this, for a couple o' days?" He laid an exquisitely wrought gold locket and chain upon the counter, whose value must have been very large, for the German-Jew caught it up with an exclamation of wonder.

"Vere from you get dish, Samuel?" he questioned, gazing at the young Bohemian sharply. "I hope dot you vasn't pen stealing dose t'ings, eh?"

"No, sir; I'm no thief, poor though I am," Sam Morgan replied, proudly. "That locket was given me by my lady-love, but poverty necessitates that I must pawn it in order to get bread to stay my stomach. I expect to strike a streak of luck, to-day or to-morrow, and will redeem it when I get money."

"Vell, Samuel, you vas a burty nice poy, only you vas pe lazier dan dunder and blitzen. Still a man somedimes vill get lazy, und vant ter shut up the shop vor a tear. Old Isaac Isaacs is one of dem Jewsharps. You vas a nice poy, Samuel,

mit a headt on you like a parrel o' caraway brandy—sharp and keen—unt as I like ter do a goot turn sumdimes, I gif you ten tollars an' 'leven cents, unt you keep de watchet unt chain!"

"What! you don't mean to say you give this to me without holding the locket for security!" Sam exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Shust egzactly dose, Samuel. You was a nice poy, unt dish vill get you a goot meal unt several 'schooners,' ofer at Shake Miller's!"

"But, see here! Suppose I never come back to settle this debt?" demanded Sam. "Didn't know an old Jewsharp like you'd trust a Bohemian with so much tin."

"Of course, Samuel, of course! If you vas not coom pack unt pay me, I gets him, nefer feer. Trust Isaac Isaacs fer dose."

"Just exactly what I intend to do, old man!" Sam replied, pocketing both the locket and the money. "Come and take a cigar!"

Isaacs, who was really an exceptionally fine fellow for a pawnbroker, accepted with alacrity. At a neighbouring store Sam purchased a couple of fragrant Havanas, and then, after shaking hands with his jolly benefactor, betook himself to the old tenement in Alaska Street, and to his room in the garret.

How cheerless and desolate everything looked now, since the light had died out of his heart—since he had no hope or plans for the future! Lonely and sad, with the pain of his first love's defeat bearing upon him, the young Bohemian threw himself face downward upon the cot-bed, and wept silently.

By and by a slight girlish figure, clad in calico, with a pretty little face of summer sunshine, and eyes of heaven's blue, glided softly into the room, but paused with dilated eyes as she beheld the youth outstretched so still upon the cot.

"Sam!" she called, softly, but he gave back no answer. "He is asleep," she continued, drawing nearer, and seating herself upon the edge of the bed. "I wonder what the matter is?"

"Wake up, Sam!" she whispered, softly, stroking his dishevelled hair. "It's Milly come to call on you."

He turned wearily over, and his tear-stained face was raised toward her.

"You, Miss Lennox? What is there I can do for you?"

He was instantly himself now, with a quick command of easy politeness and gentility—a very gentleman, in rags.

"What have you been crying about,

Sam?" the girl asked, taking his hand in her dainty ones.

"What have I been crying about, little attic angel?" he repeated, putting his right arm about her waist, and drawing her closer to him. "Well, I'll tell you. I got the grand boost, to-day, and have been blubbering about it like a great lubber that I am."

"The grand boost? I do not understand your meaning, Sam?"

"Don't? Well, in plainer language, my lady-love has skipped me and is engaged to my cousin, Arnold Chelton."

"Oh! dear, is that true? I thought you were such fast lovers, and already engaged."

"No—never quite engaged. But I always calculated she belonged to me, and *vice versa* with her. But, Chelton 'popped' before I got there, and his gift of tongue won her over. I overheard the whole tale, and after he departed, I put in my vote, but it was refused—on account of tender age, I guess," with a bitter laugh.

"Do you really care so much, Sam? Are there not others you could be much happier with than with her?" Milly asked, slowly, toying with one of her apron strings.

He did not answer, just then—not until he had gazed steadfastly at the floor, and revolved the matter considerably in his mind.

"Perhaps there are those with whom I can be happier. Thank you for the suggestion, Milly; it opens up another idea of life to me. Milly, how old are you?"

"Sixteen, Sam."

"Sweet sixteen, eh? and those words are verified in you. You are a sweet, guileless little thing, worth any man's love. I am going to leave Philadelphia, soon, dear, and quit this Bohemian life. I was made for something better. Three years hence, Providence permitting, I shall return, and ask a certain little blue-eyed girl to be my bride."

"Oh! Sam; you don't mean a word of what you say."

"Yes I do mean just what I say, Milly. But, put no hope in it. Either you or I may be dead before that time. Do you care just a little for me, pet?"

"Oh! Sam, I love you," whispered she, impulsively throwing her arms about his neck, and bursting into tears. "I think I have loved you a great while, Sam."

If Sam Morgan had ever dreamed of the trap that was being laid for him, he would have been on his guard, for he was a believer in dreams. But no warning of impending peril and death was granted him, and he sought out the wharf at Prime

Street next morning, and found a steam yacht of trim build tied up, with a gang-plank out. A man was pacing to and fro along the pier, and judging from his repulsive appearance, Sam put him down as a mate of some of the neighbouring vessels, until the individual accosted him.

"Ahoy, thar! Be you the younker that I hired to work aboard the 'Sea-Gull' to-day?" was the salute, in a gruff voice.

"Guess I'm the individual, if you're the snoozer that's got a convenient double-X!" Sam replied.

"Well, I'm your man. Goin' ter take a party of excursionists down the river to the bay, you see—crack, snap, too. Your place will be down in the engine-room, and mind you don't show your visage above decks the whole trip. Can you run an engine?"

"Shouldn't wonder! Fork over your rocks, and I'll try at least. What's your handle?"

"My name's Captain Gueleppo!" was the response, "and here's your pay. Get you below now, and have steam up inside of half an hour."

Sam received the money, and went down into the engine-room, which was neatly fitted up with an upright boiler and engine, and everything convenient.

He set briskly to his task, for, Bohemian though he was, he knew how to work, though it was a thing he despised when he could exist by the labour of his brain and sharpness of his wits. He started a fire, and soon had sufficient steam.

About eight o'clock he heard the passengers coming aboard, and a little later Gueleppo gave the order down the trap to let her slide.

Accordingly the yacht swung off into the Delaware, and setting her nose against a south wind, steamed away, ploughing the waters into showers of spray.

Above decks Captain Gueleppo and Arnold Chelton were holding a close consultation.

"How many is there of you?" the Italian asked, glancing at the gay couples around and then at three or four sailors who were managing the yacht as it glided along over the beautiful bay.

"Six couples, including myself and young lady," was the reply.

"All right. Keep watch that no one comes below—I will go and arrange matters."

Sam Morgan was sitting upon a stool, looking out through a port-glass on to the bay, unsuspecting, when he was seized and

held in a vice-like grasp, while a gag was thrust into his mouth.

In another moment he lay upon the floor helplessly bound, with the villainous Italian standing over him. He expected instant death, but the ruffian had another plan. He darted into the hold, and upset a barrel of tar upon the bottom and applied the match.

The next minute he sprang upstairs to the deck.

"Fire! fire!" he shouted. "The engineer has fired the yacht and escaped. Lively, you lubbers! Lower away the long-boat and clear the deck. *You are above a mine of fire!*"

Instantly a panic of confusion ensued. The men swore and the women shrieked.

A boat was lowered and filled; the Italian captain was the last one to leave the deck of the ill-fated yacht.

By his orders the boat pulled swiftly toward the shore, two miles away.

In ten minutes the yacht was a mass of flames; then came an awful report—an explosion that scattered the burning timbers far over the bay.

What was the fate of Sam Morgan? Imprisoned in the burning yacht, was it possible to escape? If so, how?

And when those in the long-boat reached land, Gueleppo found opportunity to take Chelton to one side.

"It's done!" he chuckled. "The boy's in heaven or the other place ere this!"

"Yes, it's done," the guilty cousin replied, a whiteness of affright on his countenance. "The die is cast!"

CHAPTER V

THE BROKER AND HIS NEPHEW

THE unlucky excursionists from the ill-fated yacht found accommodations at a fishing hamlet near where they landed, and during the afternoon hailed a passing excursion steamer bound for Philadelphia. They were kindly taken on board, and arrived safely in the Quaker City after their unusual adventure. The success of the diabolical scheme of Chelton and his villainous ally had prospered beyond their most sanguine expectations, and no sooner were they in the city than Chelton paid the Italian a good round sum for his services.

Well could he afford to, for he had been summarily rid of one enemy whom he feared more than all his other foes. What doubt could there be but what Sam Morgan

had perished, either by the fire or explosion?

None, thought the scheming cousin, and he went his way rejoicing.

Four days later, in the grand bed-chamber of his handsome residence on Walnut Street, Jacob Morgan lay confined to his bed.

At the time of our peep into the apartment, two are closeted there—Arnold Chelton and the sick man.

The former was sitting near the bed, listening apparently with deep interest to what the old man was saying.

"Yes, the doctors say I am improving and shall soon be upon my pegs again," he said, in his feeble, gasping voice. "If the limb only continues to mend, and no more inflammation sets in, I guess the old gent's constitution will carry him through. Uncle Jacob ain't a-goin' to give up yet, with gold at a dollar five, if he can help himself."

"I am glad to hear your resolution, and see that you still have a few chances for life left, uncle," Chelton replied. "I am sure it would grieve no one more than I to see you die, when you ought to live a good score of years yet."

"I don't know about that, nephew. It's easy to say it, but I've had a strong distrust all along that you were only puffing the old man up, so as to keep on the right side of him, with an eye to the future. But, I've prepared everything, and them that does right shall be served right."

"By the way, nephew," the old man continued, "what would you say if I should tell you that I had left every cent to Sam Morgan?"

"I should say you were an old ignoramus, sir!"

"And why?"

"Because, my Bohemian cousin is dead—furnished food for the fishes in Delaware bay four days ago!"

"What! Samuel dead?" the old man gasped in horror.

"Exactly. Was blown up in a yacht explosion."

"I remember hearing something about that fire and bu'st up. The boy was suspected of setting the fire?"

"Yes, sir."

"And escaped?"

"We thought so, at first, but concluded not, afterward."

"We? You were along, then?"

"I was."

"I had a dream about that disaster," the old man murmured, aloud, but apparently unconscious that he did so. "I thought the boy was on the boat—down in the engine-room; that a big man

attacked and bound him; then set fire to the boat, and all hurriedly left the boat but the boy."

"And he—did he escape?"

"I cannot tell!" the old man replied, with a cunning smile. "Only time will prove that, nephew."

"Come, it's time for your medicine, Uncle," said Chelton; and going to a bureau, on which were numerous bottles and vials, he poured out a teaspoonful of a darkish liquid, and approached the bedside.

The sick man swallowed it.

"Ugh! what a nasty taste!" he said, with a shiver. "Are you *sure* it was the same I have been taking, nephew?"

"Perfectly sure," was the indifferent reply, as the schemer seated himself near the window with a book in his hand. "Don't think I would *poison* you!"

Presently the loud respirations of the old man proclaimed that he was asleep.

Then Chelton laid aside his book, an expression of triumph upon his face, an evil gleam in his sinister eyes.

"Now is my time!" he said in a shrill whisper, darting a swift glance toward the door to see that all was safe. "The old man sleeps, and I have it all in my own hands. First, the safe; then the last stroke that is to place me for ever above pecuniary want. Aha! Arnold Chelton, you're a lucky dog!"

He gave a glance at the broker to make sure that he was really asleep; then advanced to a large safe that stood in a niche at the foot of the bed. It required fully an hour of attempts and silent curses on the maker before the schemer succeeded in opening it. It yielded at last, however, and the contents lay exposed before him. There were a few books; a package of documents, out of which the gambler selected one paper and replaced the others.

"This must be it," he said, breaking the seal of the envelope with nervous fingers. "Yes—Last Will and Testament of Jacob Morgan. Ha! by Heaven, the old man has left every dollar to me! And *he shall never live to alter this will!* A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Let me see: dated May 15th—that was day before yesterday—at half-past ten o'clock, a.m. Ha! I remember now that a legal-looking gentleman called then. One called at four, but I do not think he was a lawyer. Probably this is the last will—there can be no doubt about that. Hello! what is this?"

A piece of paper had dropped from one of the folds of the will, and fluttered to the carpet.

With curiosity the gambler picked it up. In a straggling hand was written:

"ISAAC ISAACS, PAWNBROKER,
"Number — South Street."

"Isaac Isaacs!" Chelton repeated slowly. "A Jew pawnbroker. How came that in this will? What is the meaning? There surely is something in this; but what? I must call upon this Isaac Isaacs soon and see what's to pay. But first, there is this other work. By Heaven! *shall* I do murder? How else can I attain my object? If I were to let him live, he would recover, or at least change this will, for he already suspects my connection with the death of young Morgan. No! he must die, and that quickly, and leave no tell-tale traces. The inhaling liquid the Italian gave me will answer the purpose."

With nervous hands he thrust the will back into the safe and closed the door. Then he staggered to his feet and crossed the room.

He darkened the room by closing the inner blinds.

Then he drew a bottle and a soft woollen rag from his pocket, saturating the latter with an odourless white liquor from the former.

The rag was then laid over the upturned face of the broker.

With a shudder the villain turned away when this work was completed, and paced up and down the room with the tread of a cat.

Ten moments elapsed, then he glided forward and removed the woollen cloth from the broker's face.

It was perfectly dry.

And the old man lay upon the bed a lifeless piece of human clay. The poison had done its work. Not the faintest breath or the twitching of a muscle betrayed the existence of a particle of remaining life.

Suddenly a sound near the door caused him to start with a horrified curse and turn his gaze in that direction. The door was still closed, but a sudden thought caused him to raise his eyes to the transom above.

And he did so just in time to catch a glimpse of the woolly head and grinning ebony face of a negro servant.

With an oath, Chelton again drew his revolver, sprang forward and unlocked the door, and leaped into the hall. The servant was nowhere to be seen, but could be heard clearing the stairs in a flying leap.

Chelton heard him leave the house, then, with a ghastly face, returned to the death-chamber and removed the traces of his

crime, after which he descended to the library.

The nurse, an elderly woman who had been procured on account of her worthiness and knowledge of medicine, arose upon his entrance.

"Did you come from the master, sir?" she inquired.

"Yes, I would not go up now. He is sleeping very nicely, and you might disturb him. He will probably need no more care until toward night."

"Do you think he is any better?"

"Oh! yes, I have strong hopes now of his ultimate recovery. He is a great deal more lively to-day. If his heart only carries through safe, there are great chances for him."

"His heart is affected then?"

"Oh! yes—has been for a number of years."

It so happened that in this the gambler spoke the truth.

After a while he left the mansion, and walked down into town.

"Curse that negro!" he growled. "I'll find out of Tom who he was, and old Gueleppo will have another job. By the way, I think I'll hunt up this Isaac Isaacs, and see what connection he has with Morgan's will."

He left the restaurant, and walked down Tenth Street to South, as if the business he was on was of great importance. From Tenth he walked east several squares on South, and finally came to a little low building, upon whose windows the words

"LOAN OFFICE"

were painted in a variety of colours. But the place was untenanted. All the stock and fixtures had been removed, and a piece of board, nailed to the door, bore the following straightforward announcement:

"Hardt times. Sold out, paidt mine debts, unt gone West. ISAAC ISAACS."

CHAPTER VI

A FORTUNE-TELLER'S PREDICTION

ARNOLD CHELTON returned to the Walnut Street mansion of the murdered Jacob Morgan, in an unenviable frame of mind.

"It may be all right about this sudden clearing out of that rascally Jew!" he muttered, with a savage frown, "but it does not appear so."

Arrived at the mansion, he found everything in a state of confusion.

"Ha! what does this mean? Can it be——" he gasped, and then the hypocrite burst into tears, which appeared genuine, as he caught sight of the band of crape.

"Yes, young man, the old gentleman has gone and left us, at last," one of the physicians replied, solemnly.

"When did he die?"

"Some hours ago. The nurse states that you had been gone only a few minutes, when she ran up to his room to see if he still slept. And she found that he slept the sleep that knows no wakening."

"He was resting so peacefully when I left him, that I thought no danger of leaving him alone," Chelton said, with apparent humbleness of spirit. "What do you think was the cause of his sudden death?"

"Heart disease, without a doubt. A quick clogging of thick blood through the returning valves of his heart did the job. Nothing more than we have been looking for."

Chelton went to his room, where he locked himself in for the rest of the day.

He did not wish to look upon the victim of his diabolical crime, lest some way he should betray his guilt.

Two days later the funeral took place from the church at Nineteenth and Walnut Streets.

The funeral occurred upon Friday, and upon the following Monday, the new heir to all the wealth of Jacob Morgan, filed the will found in the safe, before the Registrar of Wills, in accordance with the laws of city and county.

As there was no other will of a later date found upon file, Arnold Chelton had undoubtedly succeeded in his heinous scheme; had triumphed and won, even though two lives had been sacrificed in the struggle. He was now Arnold Chelton, "millionaire," where before gambler had occupied the place of "millionaire."

Flushed and jubilant was he over his victory, and first he went to the house on North Eleventh Street, and made known his good fortune to Louise Lester.

She received him with less impetuosity than before, but his gold-blinded eyes and champaigned brain were incapable of recognizing the fact.

"Has Sam Morgan been here since the yacht burned, Louise?"

"No. Poor Sam! what a terrible fate was his! Arnold, I had a terrible dream, last night, and about him, too. Do you know what a Phoenix is?"

"A Phoenix?" he repeated, with a start. "I believe it was a fabulous bird of olden time reputed to rise from its ashes, after death."

"Somewhere I have read of a Phoenix, in a novel—startling in action, but highly improbable. I dreamt of Sam Morgan as a Phoenix, rising out of the wreck of that burning yacht—not as Sam Morgan, the young Bohemian, but as a huge serpent, with terrible fangs and wickedly gleaming eyes."

Chelton shuddered, and his dusky countenance became shadowed with a grayish pallor.

"Some horrible nightmare," he muttered. "You should be careful what you eat before retiring."

At this juncture a young lady friend of Miss Lester's came hurrying into the parlour, her face flushed and eyes sparkling.

"Oh, Louise!" she exclaimed, excitedly, "would you believe it? There is an old fortune-teller who was in our house, and told all our fortunes, and such jolly fun we had that I ventured to bring her in here;" and the girl turned and motioned to an old woman who stood by the door.

She came hobbling into the parlour, leaning heavily upon her crutch and cane. She sank upon the sofa, with some muttered thanks, and Miss Ardner turned to Louise:

"Now, Louise, you go first, and learn your destiny, and your gentleman friend next. I assure you, it is really amusing."

"Perhaps we had better retire?" suggested Chelton, and accordingly he gave Miss Ardner his arm into the adjoining room.

After they were gone, the fortune-teller took Louise's fair hand in her coarsely-gloved one.

"Your life thus far has been through sunshine, with little to grieve, except the parental loss. You have had two lovers—one you have discarded; the other you have kept. One was a gentleman—the other a double-dyed villain. You have chosen the latter. You have trouble looming up in the future, but it is too far off for me to indicate. You will grow to love this gentleman lover, but your love will be in vain. Beware of the Phoenix!"

Louise started to her feet with a cry of alarm.

"My dream! my dream!" she gasped.

She managed to stagger out into the hall, and motioned for Chelton to go in. He did so, not noticing her agitation.

The fortune-teller gazed at Chelton's hand for some time without speaking. But finally she said:

"Yours has been a chequered existence—a record more criminal than Christian. You have led a wild life—have gambled, and dealt extensively in bad money and with bad women. You have the crime of *murder* on your soul. Nay! do not start;

it is not my purpose to betray you. You may, by skilful plotting, save your neck from the *hangman's* noose! But not for any great length of time. In the future looms up an obstacle, and this obstacle is waiting for you. I cannot say just where you will meet it, but meet it you surely will. It is not a ghost, but a living dragon that has teeth like needles—a Phoenix that rose from the ashes of the ill-fated yacht, 'Sea Gull.'"

Chelton staggered to his feet with a frightful curse.

"Enough of this cursed nonsense!" he cried, his face whiter than the marble statue near which he stood. "Get out of the house at once, or I'll make business for the coroner!" and he drew and cocked a revolver, as if to execute his threat.

"Very well, I go, Mr. Chelton," the old woman replied, hobbling toward the door with alacrity, "but as a friend, I caution you to beware."

Then the old creature darted into the hall, just in time to escape a bullet from Chelton's revolver. Louise showed her from the house; then returned to the enraged man in the parlour. "What is it, dear?" she demanded, stopping him, and gazing up into his pallid face.

"Why did you allow that accursed hag in here?" he growled. "She is possessed of the devil! But I must now leave you, my dear; I have important business to attend to in town, and will call again, this evening. You will be ready to be married to-morrow, I suppose?"

"What! so soon after your uncle's death, Arnold?"

"Yes. It need make no difference. A week hence I shall perfect arrangements for our trip across the Continent. And after we have thoroughly done the Western Continent, we will visit the Old World."

"Oh! dearest, that would be so nice. I am tired of staying in Philadelphia year after year."

"And I too, and think this trip may be beneficial to us both. I will call with a minister and a male friend, to-morrow, at two. You can invite Miss Ardner to be present, if you choose. So good-bye, sweetheart."

He kissed her, and then left the mansion.

That afternoon he received a call from Jack Jaunders, Bohemian.

The youth was a second Sam Morgan, for coolness and sharpness.

"Mr. Arnold Chelton, I believe!" he observed, pausing near the aforesaid individual, and resting one foot upon the crimson velvet sofa.

"I believe so," was the reply. "Is there

not room upon the floor for your feet, young man?"

"No. I reckon not, when yours is about, old covey!" Jaunders decided. "Didn't come here to be bossed, neither. Come to make inquiries. You were on that yacht when she 'sploded?"

"No. I was in a boat, making for shore, at the time."

"Ah! yes. Where was my pard, Sam Morgan, at this time?"

"On the boat, it is believed. He set fire to the yacht, and must have crept into the hold out of sight, and been blown to atoms."

"Think he was?"

"I haven't a doubt of it."

"What a pity you and that old snoozer, Gueleppo warn't along. Think Sam Morgan's dead, then?"

"I do, most assuredly. Why?"

"Oh! I wanted to be sure. In case he's a white-winged flutterer, I've got some bizness with you, by and by. Take an optical inventory of my phiz, so that you may remember me. My name is Jaunders—Jack Jaunders, at your service!"

With which announcement the young sharp whirled on his heel and allowed the servant to show him out, while he left Chelton wondering if there was a menace implied in his words, or if it was only a freak of a curious mind and character.

CHAPTER VII

WORDS OF MENACE ON THE BACK OF A PROGRAMME

THAT was an afternoon of events at the Morgan mansion.

Not long after the departure of Jack Jaunders, the young Bohemian friend of poor Sam Morgan, another visitor was ushered into the presence of Arnold Chelton, as he sat in the grand parlour of the noble residence he had so foully won.

This individual was old and silver-haired, with furrowed features of an odd mould, a bent form, and eyes that had a strange gleam, through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles.

"M. Sardou," was the name upon the card the servant had handed Chelton, and the young millionaire gazed at the stranger sharply.

"Well, sir?" he interrogated, knocking the ashes from his cigar.

"Well!" M. Sardou assented, accepting an uninvited seat. "Mr. Arnold Chelton, I suppose?"

"I suppose so, along with yourself, sir," Chelton replied. "Why, pray?"

"Why?" M. Sardou scratched his white head a moment perplexedly. "Well, you see, I am hunting for an Arnold Chelton, and you are the man, I expect."

"I guess not," the millionaire said, carelessly. "There are three others in town by that name."

"Eh! there are? Didn't find only one name of the kind in the Directory, which led me to the conclusion that you were the individual."

"What do you want of Arnold Chelton, then?"

"Oh! that depends somewhat on circumstances. Have you or did you ever have a cousin by the name of Sam Morgan? He was a Bohemian sort of chap, I believe."

"Certainly not. We Cheltons have no kith nor kin of that name."

"Ah! then, perhaps I am mistaken. But, maybe you once knew a beautiful girl by the name of Carrie Moore. She was enticed from home and ruined by an arrant knave by the name of Chelton, and then assassinated by him."

"Ha!" Chelton exclaimed, retaining his composure remarkably well, "can it be that he was so foolish? I did not think him so base a criminal."

This was spoken as if to himself, and M. Sardou caught at it eagerly.

"What say?" he queried, sharply.

Chelton affected a violent start.

"Ah! what was I saying?" he muttered, apologetically. "You are a detective, eh?" to M. Sardou.

"Perhaps," the little Frenchman answered.

"Then your race is run. Death to you and your fraternity!" Chelton cried jubilantly, and in another instant the little Frenchman lay outstretched upon the carpet, insensible. He had not fallen by Chelton's hand, but by the hand of Guiseppe Gueleppo, Chelton's treacherous Italian tool, who had entered unobserved, and dealt the detective a terrible blow with a blackjack.

"Is he dead?" Chelton demanded, in a whisper, as he rose from his chair and drew near, with blanched face.

"Deader'n a door nail, I'll bet you the drinks!" grinned the Italian, with a chuckle. "You said death, and I give him a stinger. I'll see if any life remains."

He knelt upon the rich crimson carpet, and placed his hand over the detective's heart. There was not a throb nor the least sign of a pulsation.

"He is dead!" Gueleppo said.

"Dead! Great God! I did not mean for you to kill him. What shall we do with

him? He is a detective, and if he does not return, inquiry will be made for him. Then what?"

"Exactly. We've put our foot in it for once!" the ruffian growled, locking the door and seating himself.

"The fellow's name is Sargent, and he was as sharp as a weasel. No doubt his mission here is known at headquarters, unless he has undertaken to handle the case alone. In the former case, your only plan is to hide the corpse, and clear out. If we can first get rid of the body, I will find out if it was known that Sargent came here, and report. Prepare yourself to leave town for a while, anyhow; it will be safer. I am going to take French leave myself soon."

Later, Chelton dismissed all the servants for half a holiday, and when they were all gone from the mansion, he and Gueleppo carried the body of the murdered detective down into the cellar and pitched it through the man-trap into a sewer below, thus forever, as they supposed, hiding the evidence of their crime.

Then they reascended to the parlour.

"I am glad the thing is through with. Here is some money, and when I leave Philadelphia I want you to be close at hand, a sort of unrecognized bodyguard, you see, for which you will receive liberal pay!" Chelton said, handing the Italian a roll of bills, and motioning for him to depart.

The following afternoon saw the scheming millionaire in the Lester mansion, closeted with pretty Louise in the drawing-room, waiting for the arrival of the minister, who was to make them man and wife. He had arranged matters satisfactorily with young Heston, the law-student, and was soon to entrap another victim into his meshes.

Below, a number of Miss Lester's friends were waiting in the parlour, for, though it was against Chelton's will, she was desirous of having a few friends about her.

The arrival of the minister was presently announced, and the bride and groom were ushered into the parlour by their attendants.

Chelton gazed sharply at the minister, and an oath rose upon his lips as he perceived that it was not Charley Heston, the law-student—not he, even in disguise—but a clerical-looking individual, in white tie, and with a grave countenance.

They took their places, and the marriage ceremony was pronounced, according to the usual forms.

The last words of the clergyman had been spoken, when suddenly there rang through the room, in a clear, ringing voice, the words:

"BEWARE! the serpent is coiled to strike—the Phoenix has risen from the ill-fated yacht's ashes; the Bohemian lives in the Phoenix, while the fishes nibble upon the bones of Sam Morgan in the bottom of the Delaware. M. Sardou has taken a contract to build a new sewer; the spirit of Carrie Moore cries for revenge; the Phoenix will see that she has it! Beware, Arnold Chelton, lest you tread upon the serpent that is destined to be your death when you least think of it! Beware, Louise Chelton, for the love you refused shall yet burn a hole in your heart! Beware!"

In bewilderment and greatly astonished, the guests listened to the terrible wedding curse, emanating from some source unknown—words of menace, in a voice that was stern and accusing.

With a shriek, the bride fell into Chelton's arms in a dead faint, and in a moment, with a face deathly white, he staggered beneath her weight and dropped senseless upon the carpet, bearing her with him.

All was confusion. The bride was carried to her room and cared for by her lady friends, while Chelton was handled by the three or four gentlemen present.

Both parties were soon restored to consciousness, however, and after awhile the guests departed and they were left alone. Louise wept incessantly and Chelton's brow was clouded by a terrible frown.

"Do you know," he said hoarsely, "that a conviction is being forced upon me that Sam Morgan is *not dead*?"

"Not dead!" the young wife exclaimed with a start.

"Not dead," he answered, rising and pacing up and down the room. "By some miracle he has escaped the doom I—the doom we supposed to have overtaken him and is hounding us, thinking to destroy our happiness. But that shall not be. I will give the matter over into the hands of the detectives and they'll soon end his pretty pranks."

He rushed into the hall, seized his hat and out into the street he went on his mission of vengeance against Sam Morgan. He went to the detective bureau and offered a hundred dollars reward for the apprehension of the young Bohemian, who he was sure now was not dead.

He then returned to Louise, feeling somewhat relieved. The Lester and Morgan mansions were shut up, and the bride and groom prepared for their tour of the Continent, sparing no expense to have all arrangements satisfactorily completed.

Before their departure, however, they

went one evening to the Academy of Music to witness the opening performance of a noted songstress, it being her first appearance in Philadelphia.

Chelton chose a couple of seats in the circle, first row, looking directly off on to the stage.

The house was packed with an enthusiastic audience, for the performance was of the best; but during its progress an incident occurred, sufficient to deprive the millionaire and his young wife of their part of enjoyment.

A programme, dexterously twisted to a point, came whirling down from one of the galleries, and struck upon Mrs. Chelton's lap. Chelton picked it up; then swore outright, as he saw the words pencilled upon the back:

"The Phoenix—is abroad—M. Sardou in the sewer—Carrie Moore in heaven—Arnold Chelton in—hell!"

CHAPTER VIII

HAUNTED!

ONE year and a half later: the scene is changed.

It is night in the great land of the South—night upon the bosom of that queen of Western rivers, the ever-moving, majestic, stately Mississippi, over whose surface a brilliant midsummer's moon is throwing a flood of silvery light, illuminating the path for a small pleasure steamer that is ploughing its way northward, through a scene of exceeding beauty.

Along the shores, here and there, are grand old mansions and plantations, which carry one's mind back to those halcyon days before the Rebellion, negro shanties along the shore, and occasionally sounds of sweet negro melody floating out across the water, perhaps to the accompaniment of an old banjo.

Aboard the steamboat all was even less active than the night ashore, except it be the two busy men who managed things down in the engine-room. The captain paced a regular beat upon the lower deck, while on the upper deck several ladies and gentlemen were easily disposed, languidly watching the scene around them. Ladies of great social refinement and culture, and men of wealth and distinction, were there, forming a selected pleasure-party, whom Arnold Chelton was proud to bear in his boat—for this was the millionaire's boat, chartered to convey himself and party as

far up the river as inclination might lead them.

Chelton has just come from the cabin in company with a natty-dressed gentleman with iron-gray hair and an immense black beard, which nearly hid the features.

"Hello! here they come!" cried one of the Southerners, lounging on the deck, as the two men came up the stairs.

"Which won, colonel?"

"The Virginian won, of course," growled Chelton, savagely. "I believe he or the cards are infatuated."

The boat at last touched the shore, where whites and blacks were gathered, indiscriminately, and the work of loading began. It was a short job, for the boat's storage capacity was but small, and a dozen stout bucks were engaged in the loading. At last the job was complete, and the boat swung off.

A short time afterward an old man hobbled up on to the upper deck, where the excursionists were still seated, for none could bear the thought of seeking the close state-rooms, on such a balmy night as this.

A queer old customer was this new arrival. He was bent and apparently decrepit, for he leaned upon two crutches, and every move seemed to cause him a grunt for the pain occasioned. In his hand he carried a basket of large oranges, and these he began to pass in front of the excursionists, as if to tempt their appetites.

"Nice oranges, shentlemen!" he said, in a strange, squeaky voice. "Sweet as honey from a maiden's lips."

"Hillo!" Dice Rutherford, the gambler exclaimed; "do my eyes deceive me, or is it really old Rebellion Relic, still at his old calling?"

"Guess it's ther old man, sir," replied the peddler, with a chuckle.

"They call me Rebellion Relic, gents, because I went thru ther war without gettin' a scratch. Oranges, sir; sweet as encrusted honey from a young gal's lips, I do assure you!"

And a fine sale the old man found for his basket of fruit, soon disposing of it at a fair price.

Chelton purchased a round dozen, as he was very fond of them.

"Now, Relic!" said Dice Rutherford, as the old man finished, "can't you give us a little of your experience? I know you're chuck-full of anecdotes, and we are dying for something to break the monotony."

"Hey? anecdotes, is it? Wal, Dice, old boy, ther old man ain't as good as he used to be—lost his memory, after he got blown up wi' that steamboat explosion

several years ago; memory went on up toward the skies, while Relic come down in a sugar plantation.

"That gentleman yonder, Dice!" pointing to Arnold Chelton, "reminds me of a feller w'at used to run upon the river, whose name war Felix Gaines. He was a notorious old gambler and rowdy—called him Wild Bill, fer short—and probably he'd done more butcherin' in his time than Bill Hickox, out West. Once upon a time he bu'sted a feller's spire, in New York, an' chucked him down inter a sewer, where he was found by a couple of rat-catchers, an' fetched to life. Oh! he war a terrible cuss, I tell ye. Sum war afraid of him, for it was calkylated he could lick anything that trod ther deck.

"One night he cum aboard ther boat with a crowd of passengers, an' I see'd thar was blood in his eye, for he strid up an' down deck like a mad bull. No one sed nuthin' ter him, fer he'd 'a' shot 'em, like's not, fer interferin'. He war savage, an' bymeby he began cussin'. We didn't kno' the cause, till we see a boat put out from ashore, an' in a few minutes a half-dozen planters an' a gal came aboard. All war armed wi' revolvers an' whips, and it looked as if some one war goin' ter git dressed out in shape.

"When Wild Bill see'd 'em he swore a lot of Bible names, an' he sed, sez he:

"'Heer I am, you devils, if it is Wild Bill ye want!'

"'W'ich it is,' sed one of the planters, and then they rushed upon him, bound him hand an' foot an' each give him a whack with the whip, an' each put seven bullets inter his carcass!"

"Horrible!" exclaimed one of the ladies. "I never knew such horrible crimes were perpetrated in the river-boats, bad as were their reputations. It seems incredible, sir!"

"But ar' nevertheless a fact, ma'am. But Wild Bill warn't dead, not by a long shot. Phoenix-like he riz frum his bleedin' ashes, an' ther last planter hed only just left the boat w'en Bill sung out:

"'I'll bet five hundred dollars I can beat any man aboard at a square game o' eucher!'"

In the laughter that followed, Old Relic slipped from the deck and went below, followed by Dice Rutherford.

"Hello!" presently exclaimed one of the company—"here's a novelty. That old skinflint has cheated me by selling me a hollow orange. Ha! and as I live there is a paper inside of it. What trick is this?"

Instantly a curious crowd gathered around him, and he drew forth the crumpled paper and spread it out:

"Ha! strange reading, I must say: '*The Phoenix lives, while Sam Morgan lies dead in the bottom of the Delaware!*'"

As the words were spoken, the face of Arnold Chelton and his wife became deathly white, and while the latter sank upon the floor insensible, the former drew a revolver, and sprang down the stairs to the lower deck.

The first man he encountered was Gueleppo, the villainous Italian, who occupied the position of temporary captain of the boat for the trip.

"The old tramp—what has become of him?" Chelton demanded, excitedly. "Quick! speak before I kill you!"

"Kill me?" growled Gueleppo, grimly. "Reckon it wouldn't pay you to do that, Cap. What about the tramp?"

"Where is he?" roared the millionaire, nearly beside himself with rage.

"Who—the old orange peddler?"

"Yes! yes!"

"He's gone ashore in a boat which he had towin' alongside."

"And the gambler—Dice Rutherford?"

"Went with him!"

"Ten thousand furies! Why did you let them escape? One or the other of them was the accursed boy we tried to burn in the yacht. He is alive and dogging me, wherever I go."

CHAPTER IX

AT BULL'S RUN

BULL'S RUN!

Not the famous battle-ground, whereon so many brave hearts fell, but a little Western mining-town of no particular excitement or interest.

The place probably numbered two hundred souls, and shanties for the accommodation of these humans were unevenly scattered about without any attempt at streets. There were one or two taverns, a smithy, and a school-house; also one dry-goods store and a pawnbroker's shop.

Just about a year after the occurrence of the events last narrated, the stage one day brought to Bull's Run a trio of strangers—the Cheltons and their body-servant, the villainous Gueleppo.

Their arrival created considerable excitement among the inhabitants. What did it mean?

No tourists so richly dressed as this party had ever graced the town before.

Straight to the foremost tavern the

Cheltons went after disembarking from the stage, and procured apartments and accommodations for three days, which was to be the limit of their stay.

Later in the day, after their arrival at Bull's Run, Chelton entered his wife's apartment, a strange expression upon his face, as he beheld the little creature—not yet a woman in age—sitting at a window, and gazing wearily out at the bleak aspect of their surroundings. All this travel and sight-seeing had lost its charm with her; she longed to return to dear old Philadelphia.

"Well, my dear, how do you like the look of things in this out-of-the-way place?" was his salutation, as he seated himself and removed a cigar from between his teeth. "I flatter myself it is just the place for my business."

"For your business?" she interrogated, looking up indifferently.

"Exactly, dear—for my business. I have brought you here for a purpose, as you have probably not guessed. You must now do what I requested you to do, some time ago—sign over your property to me!"

"No! never!" she cried, rising to her feet, indignation in her voice and demeanour. "Villian though you are, Arnold Chelton, you shall not triumph in this. Is it not enough that you have spent all of your own available cash, without squandering mine? No, I will *never* sign over my little fortune into your hands."

"You won't? Well, then, while I call Gueleppo in to hold you, it shall be my unpleasant duty to cut your fair throat from ear to ear!"

Louise uttered a cry of horror.

"Oh! surely! surely you would not murder me, Arnold?"

"Sorry; but that is precisely what I shall do, unless you sign the papers which I have here, all in readiness. I had them made out in St. Louis. Gueleppo!"

"Yes, sir," came the response, and the Italian stepped inside the room. "At your service, sir!"

"Good! Did you find a place to get the knife sharpened?"

"No, sir; but I purchased one at a Jew pawnbroker's below here, which is as keen as a razor."

"Very well; that will answer the same purpose. At a Jew pawnbroker's, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"What kind of an individual?"

"A Jew, sir, with a big corporosity."

"Ha! and did you notice or learn what his name is?"

"I just chanced to glance at his sign, sir. Isaac Isaacs is his name!"

"Is it possible? The very man I want to see. He skinned out of Philadelphia, two years and a half ago."

Then Chelton turned upon his young wife, who was sobbing bitterly.

"Come! come! you baby, dry up your bawling. Will you sign the papers, or have your throat cut, in preference? Give me the knife, Gueleppo, and prepare to seize her!"

"No! no; I will never sign them, you demon!" Louise fairly screamed, rising to her feet, and levelling two revolvers upon the astonished villains. "Get out of the room, or, as God is my judge, I will put a bullet through both of your black hearts!"

Astonished beyond measure, Chelton slunk hastily from the room, and was followed by his tool, the Italian. Down in the bar-room below, the two worthies held a consultation over their defeat, which Chelton closed with the following words:

"We cannot do anything more with her at present. Next time we will use revolvers instead of knives."

Then they parted, although the faithful Italian was always within call, ready to fly to his master's aid in case of need.

Chelton went out from the tavern, and searched for the pawnbroker's. He was not long in finding a little shanty close by, over the door of which hung a sign:

"ISAAC ISAACS, LOAN OFFICE"

"Ah!" the millionaire exclaimed, as he stepped within the front room, which was occupied as a store; "this is the place, as I thought."

Isaac Isaacs—the identical, self-same Isaac, glossy-faced and rotund—stood behind the counter, burnishing a brass watch-case into a fair representation of gold.

"Hello, Mr. Isaac Isaacs!" cried Chelton, with a grim laugh. "This is the last place in the world I should expect to find *you*."

"Eh? you vas surprised ter vind der oldt Vandering Jew vay out mit der West, hey? Vell, pizness got so slow in de city, unt I vas so ferry poor, dot I vas forced to pull out. Who vash you, onnyhow? Ish you Dan Jones?"

"Oh no!"

"Philip Schneider, den?"

"Nor Philip!"

"Ish dot so? Den you must be dot t'ief, Jake Schwartz, vot sdole away mit a tray of my gold hunding-gase watches. Aha! you peesh Shake?"

"Ha! ha! old man, you're wrong again. I don't think you know me at all;

never knew you—at least, intimately. My name is Arnold Chelton, the millionaire. I succeeded to old Jacob Morgan's estate. But, old man, I have a little business with you, which we can just as well transact now, as any other time. *What do you know concerning the will of the late Jacob Morgan, deceased?* ”

“Hey? how vas dot?”

“What do *you* know about the will of the late Jacob Morgan, deceased?”

“Nodinks—literally nodinks.”

“You lie.”

“You lie pack again, mit yourself!”

“Look out, you infernal Jew! You'd better not r'ile me.”

“Neider vas it so nice as you might dink to agitate a man of my caliber, sar!” replied Isaacs, with a grin, as he held up a knotty pair of fists.

Chelton grew livid with rage, and it is doubtful what he would have said or done had not at this instant a third person entered the room.

He was a young negro, with a face as black as an ace of spades, the whites of his eyes showing ludicrously. He was well formed, commonly dressed, and wore a clownish hat on his head, which was covered with a mass of jetty hair, in the finest, wooliest curls. In his hand he carried a banjo that had evidently seen many hardships.

“Hello! ish dot you, Mister Snow?” exclaimed Isaacs, advancing from behind the counter and setting a chair. “Take a chair unt give us some music. I ish a loafer of goot music, ant you haven't bin aroundt since week pefore next. Mister Snow, dis ish Mister Chelton Avenue, from Philadelphia.”

The negro acknowledged the introduction with a grin and a bow, and then proceeded to tune up his aged instrument. While he was thus engaged Arnold Chelton gazed at him as though stupefied.

For in that face, black as it was, *he recognized the features of Sam Morgan!*

Yes, there could be no mistake; they were the same as when he had last seen them two years and a half ago.

Sam Morgan alive!

True enough, like a Phoenix, he had risen from his ashes! And with him alive, what did it signify to Arnold Chelton? Sooner or later—*death!*

Mr. Snow strung up his banjo, and then played several artistic solos.

He soon finished his performance, and arose to depart. Chelton tossed him a coin, and then hurriedly left the pawn-shop. Outside, he found Gueleppo lounging conveniently near.

“Watch the negro—trail him to his lair, but be cautious in your work!” the millionaire said, as he hurried by toward the tavern, never once looking at the Italian. But Gueleppo understood, all the same, and kept his vigil.

He did not put in an appearance at the tavern, until about midnight, but Chelton was still up and waiting for him, in the bar-room.

“What made you so late?” he demanded, impatiently.

“Oh! I took matters easy, and made sure of my game,” the Italian replied, in a chuckling whisper.

“You didn't capture him?”

“Yes, I did—knocked him down, bound him, and carried him out of town, four or five miles from nowhere.”

“And killed him?”

“Not much. I left you to do the butchering part. Reckon I've salted away about enough humans to insure me a safe passage to the devil's regions.”

“All right. I'll finish the job,” Chelton said, grimly. “Wait here till I go and get my medicine.”

“Are you going to use the same stuff you fixed out old Morgan with?”

“Yes—the inhalation, you gave me.”

“Better stick him with a knife, along with it, to make sure.”

“Ugh! no; I detest bloodshed, where I have to do it personally. The liquid ought to do the work.”

“It will, I'll guarantee.”

Chelton ran up to his room—one he had engaged separate from that used by his wife, and soon returned, motioning for Gueleppo to lead the way. Accordingly they left the tavern and issued out into the dark, starless night.

In half an hour, by swift walking, they came to where the figure of the negro lay outstretched upon the ground, with his ebony face upturned toward the heaven. He was securely bound, and rendered utterly helpless.

“Ha! ha! Sam Morgan; again we have you!” Chelton exclaimed, kneeling beside the prisoner. “Once before you escaped death, but you shall not now.”

“You cannot kill me!” was the reply in a low, strange tone. “You murdered Sam Morgan in a most horrible manner, but his spirit, clothed in the flesh of the Phoenix, arose to haunt you and put you ‘through to death.’ The Phoenix is imperishable!”

“Aha! we will see about that. I have a poison for you to inhale, here, which will fix you, I guess. Gueleppo, tie this cloth over his face!”

The Italian firmly fastened the patch of

woollen cloth over the negro's face, according to direction. Then Chelton hastily poured the contents of a large vial upon the cloth, after which the two villains turned back toward Bull's Run.

On the following morning the Chelton party left Bull's Run on the stage.

CHAPTER X

THE PHOENIX ARRIVES

DEADWOOD!

The wonderful Black Hills city, of strange, exciting history and wild reputation—Deadwood, the theme of conversation when Eastern men meet Western—the first city in size, population and commerce in the Black Hills. Why describe it? It is the same now as when the notorious Deadwood Dick disappeared from his chief field of action for Jim Bludsoe, Jr., to come and take his place with as daring a gang of men as ever Dick had headed.

Some even said Bludsoe was a second Dick, or the old one in disguise, but of course this assertion was improbable, when Dick was known to be up at Eureka, in Idaho.

One balmy afternoon toward the close of last October, six months after the events last narrated, the Cheltons arrived in Deadwood. They came in on the stage and took quarters at the United States for an indefinite period.

Gueleppo, the Italian, was with them as usual.

At this time Jim Bludsoe, Jr.'s name was upon everybody's tongue in the metropolis; miners and stage-drivers daily brought in complaints; a thorough-going, first-class road-agent the fellow evidently was, and his backers were evidently accomplished scamps. But when that evening's stage from Hayward City was rolling noisily through Black Canyon, six miles out from Deadwood, it was signalled to halt by a clear ringing voice, and out of a transverse defile rode this Bludsoe and his men, in pairs, and surrounded the stage.

A few shots were fired by the passengers within the stage, and one or two of the road-agents dropped out of their saddles. But, when the grim riders closed in on every side, the passengers saw that resistance was useless, and became quiet.

Then the youth, Bludsoe, Jr., dismounted, and flung open the stage door.

"Jim Bludsoe, junior, gents!" he said, coolly, peering within. "All you that have

valuables will confer a favour by handing them over without delay. We road-agents cannot wait long, on in-going carriages!"

The passengers grumblingly handed out their valuables, all of which the road-agent coolly stored in his capacious pockets.

When he had received all, evidently, he sprang to the back of his horse, his men swept aside, and the stage was allowed to continue its journey toward Deadwood.

That evening Mrs. Chelton was seated in a parlour of their suite of rooms at the hotel, watching the surging tide of humanity below, in the main street of the town.

Mrs. Chelton was all alone. Arnold and Gueleppo had gone out, to visit some gaming den, no doubt, and she had naught to occupy her attention but to watch the crowds below—not until she heard a foot-step within her room.

Then she sprang to her feet, and uttered a shriek as she beheld the form of a man standing close by, in the light of the chandelier.

"Sam Morgan!" she cried, growing deathly pale.

"Jim Bludsoe, Jr., at your service!" he replied, coolly.

"Oh! it cannot be! Do you think you can deceive me? You are——"

"Jim Bludsoe!" came again; "the road-agent, and Phoenix, which rose from the ashes of Sam Morgan!"

And a striking looking chap was this Bludsoe. Straight and muscular of form, with limbs like bars of iron; a broad, deep chest, an upright, manly carriage; a face which though brown and tanned was handsome; eyes keen and piercing; mouth firm and resolute of expression; and hair brown and worn long upon the shoulders.

Louise uttered another scream at the words of the handsome stranger.

"Oh! do not deceive me?" she pleaded, piteously. "Tell me the truth, and free my mind from this harrowing suspense!"

"Was I not killed in that explosion on the Delaware?" he said, gazing at her thoughtfully. "I don't see how I can be alive and Sam Morgan, after being securely bound, and left a prisoner in the engine-room of the yacht. No, I am not Sam Morgan—that is impossible. I am Jim Bludsoe, Jr., the Boy Phoenix."

She came swiftly forward—so close to him that her breath fanned his sunburnt cheek.

"What do you want?" he demanded, shrinking away, a pace, as if her presence were contaminating.

"I want you to take me away from Arnold Chelton—protect me from his

brutality—take me, and fly to another part of the earth, where I can live solely in your love.”

“Then you *do* love me, yet?” he asked, gazing down at her, curiously.

“Love you! Dear Sam, I have never ceased to love you. I loved you even when I made the one terrible mistake of my life, in marrying Arnold Chelton; I love you still, only with a passion tenfold stronger,” she replied, throwing her arms about his neck. But he hastily freed himself from her embrace—put her off at arm’s length, and held her there.

“Don’t!” he said, gazing at her almost sternly; “remember you can be nothing to me, while you are *his* wife!”

“But he is wild, reckless and dissipated, and if by some act of ruffianism he should meet a merited death?” she questioned—“what then?”

“Don’t give me conundrums to answer!” he said, sternly. “My name is Bludsoe, Jr., and I am not now a marrying man. You chose a villain in my place three years ago, and you will have to abide with your lot. You will confer a favour by not mentioning me to your amiable husband, as he might kill me again, which would put me to the trouble of once more rising from my ashes. I bid you a pleasant good-evening, Mrs. Chelton,” and then the road-agent turned on his heel and strode from the room, leaving a white-faced, wild-eyed woman staring after him.

In the meantime Arnold Chelton was spending his evening in gambling at a kenotable in the metropolitan saloon, in company with a little, white-whiskered old Mennonite gambler, whose name was Harwood. Three times the millionaire had lost largely, and he was cursing his ill-luck roundly, when a new-comer stepped up.

“You have lost some of your former practice, I guess, old fellow!” this new-comer exclaimed, slapping Chelton familiarly upon the shoulder. “The time was, three years ago, when you were the terror of all the faro and keno games in Philadelphia.”

Chelton looked around with an oath.

“Who are you?” he growled, eyeing the handsomely dressed stranger in surprise. “I don’t know you.”

“Guess not,” assented the other. “Three years covers up old tracks of guilt, and puts new faces on old acquaintances. My name is Jack Jaunders, detective!”

“And a consort of Sam Morgan, also!” Chelton cried, fiercely. “Ha! ha! but I guess I do remember you. You were Dice Rutherford, on the Mississippi.”

“Probably. We detectives have to

get ourselves disguised sometimes, and associate with the worst of villains, such as you and that Italian dog of yours!”

“Look out, sir, or you will repent your words!” Chelton cried, springing to his feet. “I will tolerate none of your insolence!”

“Oh! you won’t, eh? Well, maybe in preference you’d rather tolerate a pair of bracelets!” and Jaunders brought forth a pair of the articles from a pocket in his coat.

The millionaire grew white in an instant, and reeled back.

“Remember!” Jaunders continued, coolly, “that you are wanted for the murder of several persons, in Philadelphia, and I’d just as lieve take you as not. So you had better keep quiet, if you don’t want to get your neck stretched.”

Then he turned on his heel and strode away.

As soon as he could recover from his excessive agitation, Chelton motioned to Gueleppo, who was lubricating rather freely at the bar. The Italian accordingly came up with his face flushed and breath strongly scented with the stuff the Dead-woodites call whisky.

“You saw that man?” Chelton interrogated, meaning Jaunders.

“Yes, I see’d him.”

“Well, he is a detective, and is on our trail. He will attempt to arrest us, soon, if we give him the chance. You must follow, and find where he holds forth, so that we can lay for him. It is as much to your interest as mine, for he knows the truth.”

Gueleppo turned away, grumblingly, and dogged the footsteps of Jack Jaunders.

The young detective left the Metropolitan, and visited first one and then another of the saloons, until he had made a circuit of the town.

He was evidently in search of some one, but failing to find that person, he finally relinquished his object and turned toward his lodgings.

These were in the Centennial Hotel, which stood close at hand.

Without glancing around, the detective entered the large hallway, and ascended the stairs.

Like a shadow, Gueleppo, the Italian, stole behind him, a long dirk-knife in his grasp.

Murder was evidently his intention. But this was frustrated.

On the first landing, Jaunders suddenly wheeled around, a cocked revolver in his hand.

“You git, you Italian butcher, before I

salivate you!" he cried, sternly. "Your chance to murder *me* has not come yet."

"But will come!" Gueleppo growled, turning, and descending the stairs.

He went back and hunted up Chelton, who was still playing with the little Menonite gambler.

"You were too hasty," was his comment, after he listened to the Italian's recital. "We shall have to tackle him in another shape."

But just what shape they did not conclude upon right away.

CHAPTER XI

BLUDSOE'S AGENTS AGAIN

WHEN Bludsoe, Jr., came, the Deadwoodites began to believe that a curse was resting upon their city, for never since its settlement had it known the words "peace and quietude." Either Indians or road-agents had thus far preyed upon the place almost with impunity.

On the succeeding afternoon a well-loaded stage was coming through the Two Mile Canyon from the upper mines.

At the request of the passengers within the large open stage, Jehu had allowed his horses to come to a walk, and the conveyance rolled leisurely through the deep canyon bottom, while those who were within it feasted their eyes upon the wildness and mighty grandeur of the scene.

Among the passengers was an old man, with flowing white beard, and a young lady, pretty as a dream, who from her resemblance to the man, we judge to be his daughter.

"Oh! papa! are not those mountain walls grand beyond description?" the maiden cried, enthusiastically. "They remind me of grand paintings I saw in the Art Gallery, at the Centennial, by the old masters."

"Reckon these pictures ar' painted by ther oldest master o' all, my leddy—Goramighty!" observed one of the miners. "Thar ain't one o' them genteel eastern paint-slingers as kin git a true idea o' the mountings, just as they are."

"There is some truth in your assertion, sir," replied the maiden's father, bowing. "I do not think the generality of artists do get the correct idea of mountains and mountain scenery and life, although some creditable approaches are made."

"Yes; ther artist chap neglects ter put in a band o' road-agents, allus, which robs

the picture uv ets due romance and poetry."

"Ah! do you have road-agents up here in the Hills, then, as we did in California, years ago?" the old man demanded.

"Reckon we do, capt'in; leastwise, thet's w'at they say—kinder licensed toll-gates, ye see, kept by gentlemen, who'd as leave shute as h'ist 'mountain dew.'"

"How is this, driver?" the old gentleman demanded, turning to Jehu. "Do you apprehend an attack from road-agents?"

"Shouldn't wonder," replied the man, indifferently. "Bludsoe, Junior, bosses this trail, since Deadwood Dick left, and he generally turns up about stage-time. An', by the way, ye'd better be a gettin' out your contributions, fer yonder aire Bludsoe and his men, now, a-waitin' fer us;" and the driver pointed down the canyon, where some thirty-five or forty men were collected, some of them being drawn in a line across the gulch, while others were lounging about on convenient rocks.

"Yes; them's yer road-agents!" cried one of the passengers, taking out his pocket-book with a sigh. "Paid my toll last week, but I expect I'll hev ter pay et ag'in. No use a-groanin', pilgrims; it's fork over, or stop cold lead."

The stage stopped promptly, when the horses' noses came on a line with the barricade of outlaws. Jehu [knew his business—knew his life would pay the forfeit should he attempt to run past.

"Heer we aire, gentlemen—at Bludsoe's toll-gate; no shootin' now, or I'll not be responsible for what happens."

"Your valuables, my friends!" cried a clear, ringing voice, and young Bludsoe, the handsome, dandified successor of Deadwood Dick, stood by the side of the stage. "This is a foreign port into which you have sailed, and you must pay the custom-house duties."

One by one the miners forked over their valuables without a grumble—watches, rings, pins, and a laughable assortment of pocket-books and dust-pouches. As Bludsoe came to Governor Lennox and his beautiful daughter, and as his eyes rested first upon the latter, he leaped back with an exclamation.

"Milly Lennox, *you* here!" his face flushing with pleasure and then with shame.

"Sam Morgan, *you* here, and in this position!" Milly cried in astonishment. "You a road-agent?"

"So they say, Milly. My name is no longer Sam Morgan. As that boy, I perished in a yacht explosion upon the Delaware river three years ago. I arose from my

ashes, like the fabulous Phoenix, in the guise of Jim Bludsoe, Junior."

"What means this intimacy of yours with this outlaw, child?" demanded Governor Lennox, angrily. "Driver, move ahead!"

"Just hold your mules till I say go, Jehu!" ordered Bludsoe, Jr., coolly. "You don't run this stage, old gentleman, *quite* yet. For your impudence I should be justified in demanding your valuables, but on account of your daughter, who used to be a very dear friend of mine, I will allow you to escape unscathed. You may consider yourself lucky. The other plunder, gentlemen, I will dispose of at a good figure, and the money proceeds therefrom shall go toward establishing a public school fund at Yankton, Dakota. My outlawry is not for profit so much as for excitement. Miss Lennox, we will meet again. Jehu, you are now at liberty to bowl along once more toward Deadwood."

And Jehu needed no second invitation; he swung his long-lashed whip, gave a screech that made the mountains ring, and away went the stage tearing down the canyon road at a tremendous speed.

CHAPTER XII

AND THE PHOENIX ROSE

THAT same evening Arnold Chelton received a visit from the Phoenix while smoking an evening cigar on the balcony of the United States.

He was at the time alone upon the balcony—sat with his feet perched upon the back of another chair enjoying his Havana and gazing down upon the multitudes who thronged the street below.

Nor did he hear a sound of human approach until a low quiet laugh aroused him, and caused him to look around with a start. Then he leaped to his feet with an oath, believing he saw in the ironical Bludsoe a living Sam Morgan.

"*You!*" he gasped, staggering back with a face as white as snow for the moment—"my God! what mockery is all this?"

Bludsoe motioned him to resume his seat by a wave of his right hand, which held a small cocked derringer, while he proceeded to occupy one just opposite.

Chelton remained motionless in his chair, his face still of that ghastly whitish hue; his eyes riveted upon the youth just opposite, in a wild glaring gaze; his forehead clammy with perspiration, and his heart beating sluggishly.

"What do you want?" he again faintly articulated, though it cost him an effort. "Why do you come here?"

"To pass away a few moments of time, while the sheriff and his men are searching for me, in the crowd, yonder!" Bludsoe replied, with a nod toward the street.

"I spied you up here; came up and locked the door behind me, and here we are as nice as a bug in a rug, unless you attempt to vocalize for assistance, when I shall necessarily have to bullet-doze you in the latest Carolina style. Besides, I have a little business to transact with you—wish to relieve your mind, lest you still suspect me to be a supernatural. Lend me a lucifer, please."

Chelton extended his match-case with bad grace, and Bludsoe accepted a couple of matches, with one of which he relit his cigar.

"Was up to call upon Mrs. C. last evening," the road-agent went on, all as coolly as the reputed frigidness of a cucumber, "but she didn't appear to be very happy."

"She gets treated well enough, considering that she is only my unsuspecting slave!" Chelton replied, with a sardonic grin. "The girl was never legally made my wife!"

"I think you are mistaken!" Bludsoe replied, calmly. "I know it was part of your plot with Charley Heston to have a mock marriage performed; but it so happened that Morgan, the deceased Bohemian, had more power over the student than his cousin, yourself, and as a natural result, he, Heston, was induced to send a real minister of the Gospel in his place! and so——"

"You lie!" Chelton cried, fiercely.

"It's the truth," said Bludsoe, "and nothing but the truth, that you are legally bound to her who was Louise Lester, and I happen to possess duplicate papers to show for it. So, this little information will furnish you food for future meditation. Perhaps you would like to know how I escaped the two traps you so generously laid for me?"

"In the stern life which we live, we never know when we are to be stricken. I was of course ignorant of peril—ignorant of the hellish trap you had laid for me, until Gueleppo caught me at a disadvantage and made me powerless. Then when I saw him set fire to the yacht, the whole truth flashed across my brain and I knew to whom I owed this threatened death. In vain I struggled to free myself. Not because I was afraid to die did I struggle—I only yearned to get free for the sake of revenge. And I was destined to have my wishes gratified."

"Suddenly a figure leaped from the burning hold, where the flames were raging madly, and my bonds were cut, and I was pitched head-foremost into the bay, through the port-hole where I had been sitting at the time of my capture. The next minute my old chum and Bohemian pard, Jack Jaunders, came after me, and I knew to whom I owed my life. He knew Gueleppo to be a rascal, and scenting crime, he concealed himself aboard—quite luckily for my welfare.

"We swam out into the bay at a safe distance, and floating upon our backs, allowed the tide to wash us ashore. The next day I arrived in town and had the pleasure of reading my own obituary.

"That affair on the Mississippi was clever enough, but I did not give you a chance to nab me, as you would have liked no doubt. But at Bull's Run, you again got the best of me. Your villainous Italian again laid me out when I was not expecting him, and then you came to finish the job. That was intended for a poisonous inhalation, what you put upon the cloth and spread over my face, eh?"

"Yes!" Chelton assented, with a wondering nod.

"Well, it was the most grateful poison I ever inhaled. By mistake you had brought along your perfumery bottle, in the place of your poison, and saturated the rag liberally with French cologne. I take the present opportunity to thank you, for in those days I was not able to purchase an article so grateful to the smell!"

"You have been cursed fortunate!" he growled, savagely, "but you cannot always resist death, whether you call yourself devil, Phoenix, or what?"

"I do not intend to give you another dig at me!" Bludsoe assured, with a grim smile. "I shall keep watch of you. When I feel in a proper disposition, I shall arrest you and take you back to Philadelphia, and swing you off a scaffold, within Moya's walls, for double murder. Ah! Arnold Chelton, you have fewer secrets from the Phoenix than from the old Sam Morgan. I saw you take the life of our uncle; I was the darky who so bothered you. I was also that old fortune-teller, who knew so much about your business; I was within the Lester parlour, in deep disguise, at the time of your marriage; and I was the *sham* M. Sardou, whom you so kindly chucked down the sewer. But for the emptiness of that subterranean passage, I probably should never have escaped!"

"You have been everything but the devil, and a part of him!" was the reply, as Bludsoe arose. "Going?"

"Yes, beloved cousin, though I assure you it causes me much sorrow to part from so angelic a being!" Bludsoe replied. "We shall meet again, I trust."

Saying which the road-agent backed off the balcony, and was gone.

The following forenoon, Chelton went to Louise's room, a very devil gleaming in his eyes. She was reclining upon a bed, but arose quickly as he entered, her face quietly subduing a look of expectancy that had for a moment lingered there.

"See here, you hussy!" the man cried, advancing until he stood directly before her; "do you know what I have just found out?"

"How should I?" she replied, wondering what was coming and trembling in anticipation, for she had grown to fear him, when angered, he was so harsh and cruel—more like some savage wild beast he often conducted himself, than like an intelligent human being.

"How should you, indeed? Why, I have found out that you are legally and lawfully my wife!"

Louise started to her feet.

"Why!" she gasped—"did you ever think me *not* your wife?"

"Yes—of course! I supposed that the man who married us was a sham; but Sam Morgan's accursed interference made a balk, and a true minister was sent—and you are legally bound to me, where I had supposed you to be only my tool and victim."

"Then God praise Sam Morgan!" the young wife cried with spirit.

"Eh! you think you triumph?" he sneered. "Oh! no; you die, curse you—you die, and by my hands, and may my everlasting curse follow you to the place you will go to!"

He sprang upon her like an enraged panther, and clutched her by the throat, forcing her heavily back upon the bed. She tried to scream—to get her breath, but in vain. The wretch's fingers were clutched like a vice around her fair throat, and he threw his whole strength into that gripe.

She grew purple in the face, and when five minutes later he released her she had ceased to breathe: poor Louise was dead.

Dead—her young life blasted and gone in its ripening beauty, and murdered by her husband. He staggered back from his work, with a ghastly face and a shudder of horror.

"This makes three murders!" he said, hoarsely—"two more, and I am free. Free as I was ere I began this criminal life—ah! how long ago it seems! It is

better I should be rid of *her*! I now have her property, as I can easily forge her signature——"

At this instant the man Gueleppo burst hastily into the room, his manner betraying great excitement.

"We must fly! fly!" he cried. "It is our only hope. Jack Jaunders, the young detective, is now in this very building ready to arrest us when we come down stairs. He has fifty 'regulator guards' with him, and we cannot think of fighting. What ails her?" with a side glance toward the bed.

"Dead!" was the laconic reply.

"Great Heaven! did you murder her too?"

"Yes—just to keep my hand in. But, come; there is not a moment to be lost!"

And neither was there!

CHAPTER XIII

BLUDSOE AND MILLY

BLUDSOE, after leaving Chelton, passed down through the hotel, taking care to pull his hat over his eyes, lest he be recognized, and from the hotel out into the street.

"I must disguise myself," he muttered, "for it will not be safe to stalk around as I am. I'll go and get a heavy moustache of old Isaacs, and a Mexican cloak, and then go and visit Miss Lennox."

Straight toward the pawnbroker's he pushed his way, and soon came face to face with Jack Jaunders.

"Have you made any definite time for the caging of our game?" the young detective demanded.

"No; but I've been calling on Chelton, which was all I wished to do before his arrest."

"Then had I not better procure proper aid, and nab him, ere he slides off without our knowledge?"

"Go ahead and seize them. I need not necessarily be brought into the examination here."

"No—you will be wanted when we get back to the States."

Then the two parted, going in separate directions.

Bludsoe repaired to the pawnbroker's, effectually disguised himself, and then hurried to the Centennial Hotel for an interview with pretty Milly Lennox.

Lucky enough was he to encounter her in the hallway, looking as bright and

charming as one's imagination can picture.

"Sam! Sam! Is it really you?" she cried, in raptures of joy. "I did not know you at first, in that false moustache and great cloak."

"Yes, Milly, dear, it is Sam, for all three years have passed since we last parted. I have had some doubts lest you would not care to see me after knowing my present profession."

"Oh! Sam, in the three long years that have passed I have looked forward to the moment as the happiest in my life when I should meet you again."

"And is it a happy moment, dearest?" and the young road-agent clasped her closer, while he kissed her ripe, sweet lips. "Can you and do you love me, road-agent though I am?"

"I love you with all my heart!"

"Ah! then I have won my prize by waiting, eh? I am to be rewarded in your sweet little self, for my patience?"

"If you can get papa's consent."

"Your papa be hanged!" Bludsoe exclaimed. "Where is he? I want to interview him. Come! along we go!"

And straight into the Lennox suite of rooms marched the Phoenix, with poor Milly, white with terror, tugging at his coat-tails. The first room entered chanced to be a parlour, and here old Governor Lennox was seated.

"Hello!" saluted Bludsoe, Jr., from the centre of the room, "here I am, as you see. Bludsoe, Junior, Phoenix and road-agent!"

Straight to his feet sprang the so-called "Governor."

"Heavens! what does this mean? Mildred, child, explain the presence of this young ruffian!" he gasped, in holy terror. "Sir-r-r! leave the room instantly or I will give the alarm!"

"Do it at your peril, sir!" was the cool threat.

"What do you want here?" the old man demanded sternly.

"I will tell you," the Phoenix replied. "Three years ago, before I was driven into bankruptcy on account of the stringency of my monetary affairs, I met this maiden in Philadelphia. We resided on Alaska Street, a very dignified thoroughfare, and in Mother Maginn's tenement-house, where I occupied the first floor—below the roof. Here our acquaintance and love germinated, and the seasons since then having been rather retrogressive, it is only now that the germs of the past have become ripened, and suitable for harvest. Therefore, we do come unto you, and ask that you, as a

lawful citizen and promoter of good, do give your consent that we padlock ourselves together, and express ourselves Eastward ho!"

The "Governor" stood listening, in a half-belligerent attitude, and when Bludsoe finished, he brought his fist down upon the table with a vim that made things tremble.

"No!" he roared. "No! my daughter shall never marry a road-thief, while I live."

"Adieu!" said Bludsoe, with a bow. "You don't appear to be favourably inclined toward my suit now, but time may change things. Your daughter the Fates have destined shall be my wife, sooner or later."

"Never, sir!"

"Oh! don't you deceive yourself. Good-bye, my darling!"—then the young Phoenix had taken his departure.

That was a momentous question of "what shall we do?" to the two villains, as they stood face to face in the death-chamber, where one victim lay as silent and cold as marble.

Below were the detectives, blockading the stairway, and what other avenue of escape was there?

"No, not a moment is to be lost," said Gueleppo. "Come! let's quit and lock up this room, and go up into the attic. Perhaps we may find a trap out upon the roof, by which we can escape, and by skipping from roof to roof, we can evade the detectives' vigilance, when you must charter a conveyance to hurry us to the nearest railroad station."

They left the dead woman lying upon the bed—left the room, and secured the door behind them.

Then Gueleppo searched around until he found a stairway leading to the attic, into which the two villains ascended.

It was a dark, unfinished hole under the roof, with a trap opening out, skyward. This Gueleppo pushed aside, and in another moment they were out upon the roof, which was flat, and higher by several feet than its immediate neighbours.

It proved a precarious undertaking, this leaping from roof to roof, as in some instances the eaves were four feet apart, and it was full an hour after they left the hotel top, that they landed safely upon *terra firma*.

Fortunately for them, a livery stable was near, and to this they went in hot haste.

"I want to be conveyed to Cheyenne in the fastest possible time!" Chelton said, addressing the stable boss.

"I'll give you five hundred dollars hire for your fastest rig and driver!"

"All right. Pan out your duracks, and climb inter yonder cab, an' ye'll be goin' inside o' five minutes, bound for election!"

Without a word, Chelton counted out the requisite amount from a roll of bills; then he and his villainous consort sprang into an old stage, built in the style of our city hacks, with glass windows in the doors.

Ten minutes later that same cab was flying down through Deadwood gulch at a tremendous pace, drawn by a plunging snorting quartette of fractious horses, over whose heads the veteran Jehu kept the long lash crashing incessantly. And on either door of the cab were tacked hugely lettered banners:

"THROUGH TO CHEYENNE, 307 MILES, IN 100 HOURS. BEAT IT IF YOU CAN!"

At this same moment Jack Jaunders and Jim Bludsoe, Jr., were viewing the body of the murdered Louise Chelton, as she lay upon the bed in the room where she had been left by Chelton, and where the detective had discovered her.

"She has been choked to death!" Bludsoe said, wiping the moisture from his eyes. But we must not tarry here, Jack. The demons have escaped by some unknown avenue, and may even now be fleeing from town. I will go in pursuit; you remain here and see that poor Louise has a respectable burial. If you want funds, go to Isaacs. For some unaccountable reason, the Jew has opened his coffers to our use."

"Will you take your men along?"

"As far as Cheyenne, and then send them back. Have this body interred as soon as possible, and then follow by stage. If the two wretches have fled, it is toward Cheyenne, as that is the safest, even though the longest route."

Then, after touching his lips to the cold, white forehead of the murdered girl-wife, Bludsoe turned from the room, tears in his eyes.

He still wore his Mexican disguise, and had little fear of being recognized. He descended into the street and made his way immediately to the nearest livery stable which chanced to be the one where the fugitives had procured their conveyance.

"Did two men just get a rig here for Cheyenne?" Bludsoe demanded, taking a roll of bills from his pocket, temptingly, as he stood before the stable-boss.

"You bet!" was the reply; "paid five hundred dollars, and Joe Finch is goin'."

ter put 'em clean thr'u' in a hundred hours, an' take time fer changes, at Camp Crook, Red Canyon, and Raw-Hide, or bu'st the b'iler!"

"All right; wish I'd been here, before he went; here's a note for your information!" and handing out a bill, Bludsoe hurried away.

An hour later Jim Bludsoe, Jr., at the head of thirty mounted and "heeled" road-agents, dashed furiously down through Deadwood, bound in pursuit of his two mortal enemies, and he waved his hat in farewell parting to Milly Lennox, who stood on the steps of the Centennial Hotel, as he dashed past. A few shots were fired at the dare-devil cavalcade, but none took effect.

As often as possible they effected a change of horses, and kept on hoping against hope that some accident would delay the fugitives.

But frantic though were their endeavours, when they had been ninety-nine hours out from Deadwood, they had twelve long miles to accomplish.

Madly were the poor animals lashed and spurred, but when they arrived in Cheyenne, at the depot, the train had been gone just ten minutes; and seeing the Deadwood driver, Bludsoe and his men learned that their prey had gone.

Bidding his men good-bye, the young Phoenix dispatched them back to the Hills, and then prepared himself to wait for the next train, which would not depart for two days.

CHAPTER XIV

DODGING ABOUT

IN his Walnut Street mansion, in Philadelphia, Arnold Chelton sat, with a clouded brow, and a savage glitter in his eye. The man was changed—his brow was growing deeply furrowed, more silver was gradually threading his hair, and his dress was neglected, and growing rough and shabby.

He was restless, and his eyes glared around wildly. Suddenly he beheld Gueleppo, the Italian, standing in the room.

"I thought you had sailed for Europe," Chelton growled.

"Yes, no doubt of it; but I changed my mind. Don't be sassy, for you'll need me, yet, for I came to inform you that the enemy had arrived."

"What! so soon?" the murderer gasped, starting to his feet.

"Yes; came in yesterday. Must've took the next train after ours."

"Who?"

"The Boy Phoenix and Jaunders!"

The millionaire covered his face with his hands and groaned.

"Where did you see these sleuths?"

"On Chestnut Street, conversing with a policeman. And as it looked suspicious I thought it behooved me to come and take care of you. I have brought ample disguises!" and here the villain took a bundle of clothing from in under his arm. "Our only chance, now, is to hide our identity, and roam about the city, watching for a chance to escape to another city."

So the two villains set to work, at once, for there was no time to be lost. At any moment the Phoenix might pounce upon them, with a posse of police, and hurry them to the station-house.

First, Chelton shaved off his moustache, and donned a full sweeping beard to match his hair, while Gueleppo left his face shorn of its beard and perfectly smooth.

They then changed their clothing, and donned slouch hats.

Then they left the mansion, locking the door behind them, as Chelton had not re-engaged any servants, on his hasty return from the Black Hills.

The Italian then led the way, and they sauntered down Chestnut Street to Fox's theatre, where Sid France was playing. Here they went in and spent a couple of hours at the matinee, after which they came out and adjourned to a cheap beer-garden, to avoid creating suspicion, where they partook of sandwich, sweitzer cheese, and lager to their fill.

While they were sitting in the garden, their attention was attracted to an old man, apparently growing blind, with white hair, and bent form, who entered, and groped his way along to a convenient bench not far from where they were seated.

"Hello, old man; what'll you have?" Gueleppo demanded, in as jolly and social tone as he could command. "You seem to be getting pretty well on toward the grave."

"Yes—yes!" the old man replied, in a faint, wheezy tone. "I ain't so young as I use to was. Ein beer, waiter."

Gueleppo touched Chelton upon the arm.

"Come!" he said, and the significance in his voice caused the other to follow him without a word. But when they were upon the street, the millionaire looked inquiringly into his tool's face.

"What was it?" he inquired anxiously.

"You saw that old man, eh?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"Well, that fellow was younger than either you or I. *It was the Phoenix!*"

The old man whom Chelton and his "right-bower" had encountered in the beer-garden was indeed Bludsoe, Jr., so cleverly disguised that not one out of ten thousand would have suspected his identity.

But he had failed to recognize his enemies, in this instance, taking them to be a couple of common labourers, at one of the neighbouring factories. And therefore he had been less guarded than usual with him, when in disguise.

Shortly after their departure, he also left the garden, and sauntered along down Callowhill Street to Tenth, where Ridge Avenue intersects—the location of the New National Theatre.

He found Jack Jaunders lounging here, with rather a dubious expression of countenance.

"What luck?" Bludsoe demanded, as he came up.

"No luck!" Jaunders replied. "The game is roaming in the city, yet, but so well disguised that it is useless for us to search."

"Oh! no," the Phoenix said, cheerfully, "not useless. I shall let nothing be useless till I hunt those two men down, and deliver them to justice and death!"

About nine o'clock they were at South Street wharf, when two men came hastily down the pier, and hired a boat of the old man who has skiffs to rent at this place.

Springing in, the two men pulled out into the Delaware.

"Chelton and Gueleppo!" whispered Jack Jaunders, quickly.

"I saw those two men in a beer-garden to-day," replied Bludsoe; "and I don't believe they're our game."

"I do, and am going to follow them, you hear me!"

Jaunders tossed the old man the renting price of a boat, and, leaping into a trim little skiff, seized the oars.

"Hold on, I'll go along if there is any promise of an adventure," Bludsoe said, stepping into the craft. "Now, go ahead with your ark."

Jaunders pulled quickly out upon the restless bosom of the Delaware, in the direction the two men had taken.

The night was inky black, and a misty fog enveloped the river. Overhead, the clouds were gathered in great banks and the sullen rumble along the heavens pre-

dicted a thunder-storm. Fifty yards from shore, and the lights of the city had faded from view, in the dense fog.

Steadily on pulled he, with strong but cautious strokes, his eyes peering ahead into the fog as sharply as the night-seeing orbs of the owl. And Bludsoe, Jr., was now upon the alert also.

He kept his eyes roving on either side and behind, and a couple of revolvers, which had done road-agent service in the Black Hills, he held in readiness for emergency.

"Sh!" he suddenly whispered; "listen—quick!"

Jack ceased rowing, and both listened intently. From over the waters, ahead of them, came the sounds of angry voices and angry words:

"Put down that revolver, you old lunatic, or I'll——"

"You pe shoost easy!" came back, in strong German accent; "shoost so much as raish *ein* finger, unt I make bologna sausage out off you. You foller me, unt t'inks I ish von shackass unt a cowyard, put, py Shiminny gracious, I dinks I got more revolver ash you haff!"

"Thunderation!" Jaunders ejaculated; "I cannot be mistaken, surely. That is the voice of old Isaacs, the Jew, whom we left in Deadwood."

"That's who it is!" Bludsoe, Jr., replied, with enthusiasm. "Pull ahead, and we'll take a little hand in this game!"

And Jaunders did pull, with a will.

CHAPTER XV

THAT LITTLE DEMIJOHN OF BRANDY

JAUNDERS, being an expert oarsman, sent the skiff gliding over the water, with great rapidity. Bludsoe sat in the prow, with his revolvers ready for instant use, for well was he aware of the nature of these two men, ahead of him.

Soon the skiff glided into a space in the fog, where two other boats were rocking, one of which contained the two disguised partners-in-crime, Gueleppo and Chelton, while in the other sat the old German-Jew pawnbroker, Isaac Isaacs. There was a broad grin upon his fat, shining countenance, and in his clutch he held two formidable cavalry pistols, which were levelled at the men in the other boat. They also each held a revolver, aimed at Isaacs, so that the situation was pretty well evened.

"Hello!" here interposed Bludsoe, Jr.,

as his boat glided alongside; "what kind of a Dutch pick-a-nick d'ye call this? Ha! Isaacs, is that you?"

"Yaw! yaw! dish pe der Russian army, unt dose pe der turkey-gobblers," grinned the Jew, with a chuckle. "I coome out in mine poat ter go ofer mit Camden, unt dose loafers do coome after me, unt dey t'ink ash how dey murder me, unt dey find der old Sweitzer-case wasn't so moocher asleep, as dey subbed."

"Ha! ha! good enough. I suppose you know who the worthy pair are, don't you?"

"Yaw! I twig 'em, ash der poys say. Dat is Chelton Avenue, unt dose oder shap he pe Chelton Avenue's pull-dog."

"Correct are you, and, gentlemen, it becomes our duty to arrest you, for wilful murder!" Bludsoe cried, covering the two with his revolvers. "Jaunders, will you be kind enough to step over into their boat, and clap the handcuffs on their wrists?"

Jaunders shipped the oars, drew a couple of pairs of handcuffs from his pocket, and stepped toward the other boat—not into it, for the Italian gave it a violent shove away, and down into the river the young detective went.

But he clutched quickly at the side of the enemy's boat, and succeeded in getting a hold, but so great was the velocity of his fall, that he pulled the frail craft over and completely capsized it.

Bad was this, for neither Bludsoe, Jr., nor the Jew could get a shot at the villains, ere they disappeared from view in the river.

And the blackness of the night made it impossible to sight them when they came up to the surface, if they did come up, which was not very probable.

Most likely they swam in under water until at a safe distance, and then made for the shore. Anyhow, the three friends saw nothing more of them that night.

Jaunders came to the surface, and was pulled into the boat, after which Bludsoe discovered that old Isaacs was pulling sturdily away toward the Jersey shore.

He did not hail him, but took the oars, and pulled with all his might and main for Pine Street wharf.

Jaunders was rather "down in the mouth" over the results of his blundering misstep, and said little or nothing during the passage to shore.

As soon as they reached the pier, Bludsoe sprang out, and signalled to a policeman.

"If you see two wet men come out of the river," he said, "arrest them, for they are murderers."

Then, without further explanation, he

hurried away to give the alarm to other guards beyond the water line.

But his labours were in vain, for no men were seen, nor arrests made; and it looked probable that the two villains had swum a long way above, before landing, in order to avoid arrest.

Three days passed, and the Phoenix and Jack Jaunders were on the alert, but failed to discover any clue of their game.

The two had taken up their quarters in Mother Maginn's tenement on Alaska Street, occupying the same room Sam Morgan had occupied previous to the yacht explosion, three years before.

Here they were lounging one day, smoking their pipes and listening to the wild rain outside, which was warm but still autumnal. A late autumn, too, for it was November, with nights and days not unlike August.

"Did you see anything of my new flame before you came from Deadwood?" Bludsoe asked, his thoughts going back to Milly Lennox, and to the fact that she was very dear to him.

"Yes; her father and herself were pullin' for Hayward City when I left, and tuk their baggage. Guess the old gent calculated it wasn't safe to stay in Deadwood with the gal while you were around."

"Perhaps so. But I'll have her yet, or bu'st something, after I get through here."

"Then you will go back, eh?"

"Yes; I like it ten per cent. better in the West than here. There is a wild, strange romance about life there that we do not have here in the city."

"Too much, sometimes, when you get scalped by the Indians or knocked over by a bloodthirsty road-agent—like Bludsoe, Jr., for instance."

"Pshaw! road-agents ain't such a bad set of fellows; only the people fail to properly appreciate them, I reckon."

At this instant there was a knock at the door of their room.

Jaunders rose with a lazy yawn and opened the door, to find a boy standing outside, with a small-sized demijohn in his hand.

"Well, sonny, what is it?" the detective demanded in some curiosity. "What do you want?"

"Does Mr. Jim Bludsoe live here?" the boy asked.

"Reckon he does. Why?"

"Then here's a flask of brandy for him, sir," and the boy deposited the demijohn upon the floor.

"Brandy! Hey, Jim, here's a present for

you—half a gallon of Hungarian brandy!" shouted Jack.

The Boy Phoenix came forward, and gazed at the demijohn in surprise.

"What does this mean? Who gave you this, boy?"

"Isaac Isaacs, sir!"

"Eh? the old Jew?"

"Yes, sir, w'at used to keep the pawnshop down South Street."

"Humph! wonder whatever possessed the old rogue to send this here? Who'd he say it was to, boy?"

"To Mr. Jim Bludsoe."

"Well, then, I'll keep it. Hungarian brandy; that's the prime stuff, I'll bet. These German Jews generally drink it, I remember. Hey, boy, hold up;" for the lad was about to depart. "What sort of a man was this Isaacs?"

"A fat man, sir, with shiny face, and a big corporosity."

"Isaacs it was, then. Guess it's all right, so you can go."

The boy tramped away, and Bludsoe and Jack returned to their room.

"An odd old quill is that Isaacs," the Phoenix commented, setting the demijohn upon the stand. "Somehow, I can't understand his liberality toward me of late. He is in possession of some secret, concerning me, but I'm blowed if I can guess its nature."

"Oh! he's an old rooster," Jaunders assured, grimly. "Find a Jew, will you, that is liberal, when it's out of his own pocket? Did he and your uncle have any acquaintance?"

"Conundrum. Guess not; at least I never knew anything about it."

"Didn't know Hungarian brandy was liable to evaporate into the cork, if left standing long in a close room, neither, did you?"

"Oh! I see what you are after. You want to get your lips glued onto the mouth of that Jonathan, don't you, old covey?"

"Well, I confess that I have a desire to sample the stuff. My torpid liver demands a certain amount of spiritual comfort, or I should not live-r day out."

"Oh! too thin; but, since old Isaacs has been so generous in his donation, I don't suppose it would do any harm to take a swallow, though I am no advocate of strong drink."

The demijohn was uncorked, and a couple of glasses of the liquor poured out. It was clear, pure and fragrant, and showed that the Jews have a good choice in the selection of what they drink. Rarely do they use the poisonous decoctions which so many of the Americans imbibe.

Bludsoe raised his glass to his lips; then suddenly set it back upon the table again.

"Don't!" he said, to Jaunders, who was about to taste of his; "put it down!"

"Why?" demanded the detective, in surprise. "What's up?"

"Nothing much, maybe, only don't taste of that brandy. I believe, by my soul, it is *poisoned*!"

"Poisoned?" Jaunders let the glass drop out of his fingers to the floor. "What makes you imagine that?"

"I cannot tell you. Some horrible glimpse of the death contained in that liquor, flashed before my eyes, as I had the glass raised to my lips!" the Phoenix replied, with a slight shudder.

"And you believe it's poisoned?"

"I do, sincerely."

"But what motive could Isaacs possibly have? I cannot understand."

"If the liquor is poisoned, *Isaacs* never sent it. The Jew is our friend, instead of our enemy."

"Shust pet your sauer-kROUT on dose!" cried a hearty voice, and into the room walked the old pawnbroker, as big as life, and twice as natural.

"How you vas, poys? Didn't expect a tune from olt Jewsharp, apoud dish time, eh? No, I guess nixy. Dunder, vat ish der matter?"

"Very much obliged to you for sending us this brandy, Isaacs!" said Bludsoe, grimly. "Rather you'd left out the poison, though!"

"Eh? vas? vat you say?" queried the Jew, in evident astonishment. "Vat style off a game you givin' me?"

Bludsoe explained in a few words what is already known to the readers.

"Unt you d'ink ash vat I sent der prandy, den?" he said thoughtfully.

"Vell, you make as pig a misdake as Jake Schneider did, ven he for der virst time eat some limburger cheese, d'inking ash it vas sponge cake. Oh! no; Isaacs no send dot prandy, pet yer sweitzer case on dose!"

"Then it came from Arnold Chelton!" Bludsoe decided, a terrible glitter in his eyes. "He has played the last card in his hand—and lost! Now then, we will push this thing through without delay. I think we can trace the tiger to his lair."

"It first remains, however, to prove this brandy poisoned. There is a chemist around the block. I will take a little of the brandy to him, in a glass, and let him analyze it. That will settle it."

And, accordingly he did so, taking about a tablespoonful of the liquor, and departing, informing Isaacs and Jack to await his return.

The chemist received the liquor, with an inquiring glance.

"I want you to examine that and see if it contains poison," Bludsoe said. "And be quick about it, too."

The chemist disappeared behind the partition, and five minutes later came forth.

"I cannot make a perfect analysis immediately, so that you will know the nature of the poison, as it is a foreign compound we do not often find. But, it's enough to say, at present, that one swallow of that brandy would produce almost instant death."

"Very well; that is all I wish to know at present," and paying the fee, the Phoenix returned to his room in the tenement.

"It was as I suspected," he said, "and Chelton's villainy has failed for the third time. A swallow of that stuff will kill a man."

Seizing the demijohn he dashed it into bits upon the floor, the liquor spreading out like rivers through the dust.

"Now come, both of you, and we will hunt up the boy that brought it, and he can no doubt tell us where to find the game. I think the lad hangs out in Callowhill, or some court near, at Twenty-second Street."

CHAPTER XVI

THE JEW'S SECRET

AFTER some further arrangements the trio left Bludsoe's old tenement quarters, and took the cars north to Callowhill Street, and then west to the Spring Garden Street bridge, on the eastern side of which is the popular entrance to Fairmount Park. Here they left old Isaacs lounging upon a seat, while they skirmished about the neighbourhood for the youth who had brought the poisoned liquor.

Bludsoe had no doubt but that he could find the youth, remembering that he had lived in this vicinity three years before.

Jaunders went in one direction and the Phoenix in another, and after half an hour they ran down their game, in a little by-street or alley. The boy started and flushed red and white by turns, when he saw the two young men. Knowing he was guilty, no doubt, he trembled at thought of the consequences.

He stopped still, however, at a signal from Jack Jaunders, for with one of the young men coming at him in either direction, there was no avenue of escape left.

"Well?" Jaunders demanded, interrogatively, as he laid his hand heavily

upon the youth's shoulder, "what have you to say for yourself, you young rascal?"

"I don't know—I—I didn't—I——!" he faltered, very much frightened, for he had just caught a glimpse of Jack's professional badge. "I—I——"

"Hush! if you attract a crowd, it will go hard with you, young man, and to my questions I want straightforward, truthful answers. Who gave you that demijohn of drugged brandy?"

"Isaacs, sir—the Jew that used to keep a pawnshop!" declared the boy.

"What is your name, then?"

"James Garlon, sir."

"Well, James Garlon, I want you to understand that it won't pay you to lie to us. I am on the force, and unless you make a clean breast of it, I'll jerk you off to the station-house quicker'n you ever went anywheres. Isaacs did not send the liquor, for we have seen him concerning the matter; now, who did? Who put you up with the lies?"

James Garlon began to snivel.

"I don't know——" he began, but Jaunders checked the falsehood midway in its delivery, by shaking the author of it.

"Stop! no more of your lying. You do know, and shall tell us, or we will put you to work in Moya. Spit it out!"

"I don't know," still protested the boy.

"Do you know what ailed the liquor, then?"

"No, sir."

"Well, it was poisoned. Had we drank of it, we should have died in horrible agony. Now, we want to find this would-be assassin who sent the stuff, and if you don't give us our points, we shall arrest you as being an accessory to the attempted murder. You are in for State Prison sure, unless you can put the responsibility on others."

The boy now began to cry.

"I didn't know it was poisoned, sir, indeed I didn't. Oh! don't arrest me, sir."

"Then tell us who sent you!"

"I will, I will. It was an Italian named Guiseppe Gueleppo, sir. I often run errands for him. He cum up from St. Mary's Street, an' give me a dollar to carry the brandy to Mr. Bludsoe; but I didn't know it was poisoned."

"No, probably not," Jack said, turning to Bludsoe, Jr. "What do you think of it, Jim?"

"Just what I thought from the first—Chelton is at the bottom of it!" the Phoenix replied.

"And he is with Gueleppo, in St. Mary's Street, you think?"

"Doubtless. The two villains will cling

together to the end. Chelton depends considerably upon the sagacity of the Italian man-butcher, while the latter looks to Chelton for his cash with which to procure liquid-fire. We are upon their trail, at last, I guess."

"Yes, I can easily nose them out, now, with this lad's aid. Was any one with Gueleppo when he gave you the liquor, James?"

"No, sir, he was alone."

"Did he tell you to say that Isaacs sent it, too?"

"Yes, sir, he did."

"All right. Now, we want you to show us whereabouts in St. Mary's Street this Italian lives, and then we are through with you. Pard, you wait, here, and keep your eye on this lad, while I run back to the Park and fetch Isaacs. We had best all be in at the death together."

Saying which, the young detective was off like a deer upon his errand.

He soon returned, with the fat Jew, and then the whole party set out in the direction of St. Mary's Street.

On the way, Jaunders picked up a couple of police officers, with whom he was intimate, not knowing but their aid might become necessary, ere the two tigers could be ousted from their den.

Into St. Mary's Street the little band marched, like an invading army.

James Garlon, wishing to extricate himself from blame, did the right thing, and soon pointed out the habitation of the Italian ruffian, Gueleppo. It was in one of the lower apartments of a grimy brick tenement; the blinds were closed, and the door securely fastened upon the inside.

Of course there was no response to Jaunders's rap. He had not expected one.

"You will have to pry open either the door or shutters!" he said, turning to one of the police. "If the devils are inside they intend to keep us out as long as possible!"

The officers accordingly procured axes from a neighbouring shop, and attacked the door, determinedly. Soon the panels yielded, and went in with a crash.

An aperture was then made sufficiently large to admit a man's body, and all of the party entered the den, except Isaacs, who had to wait until Bludsoe unfastened the door, as his proportions were too large to permit of his entering through the panel opening.

Inside a strange and startling tableau was presented.

Stretched out at full length upon the floor, were the forms of two men, who were

recognizable as the Italian, and his abettor, Arnold Chelton. Examination proved that both were quite dead; and they were also terribly bloated and distorted in countenance.

A demijohn upon a table close at hand revealed the cause of their death. It contained poisoned brandy, exactly the same as that which had been sent Bludsoe!

"They have grown tired of the hunted life, and taken the law into their own hands!" the Boy Phoenix said, sadly, as he gazed upon the two corpses. "May God forgive them and me!"

"Good riddance mit pad rubbish! Petter ash dey had gone deadt mit deir-selves, years ago. Dey vas von pig nuisance on der face of der earth, I dells you!" Isaacs said, rubbing his glossy chin in a satisfied manner. "Und, Samuel, my poy, vile I vas spoking mit you, I dells you sum t'ings vat you don't know."

"Your uncle, Shacob Morgan, made swi wills—one in der forenoon off der 15th of May, unt one in der afdernoon off der same day. Ter first one lef' old der broberty mit Chelton Avenue, an' was locked up mit der safe; der last one lef' it all mit you, so helb me gracious. Dis last vill der old man, who vas a vriend mit me, blaced in my care, along mit dirty t'ousand dollars in cash, vich I vos to keep ondil you got old mit twenty-one years. Yo see ash how Shacob vasn't afraid der trust der old Jewsharp, because ash vot he knew Isaacs vas an honest man."

"Vell, he wanted Chelton Avenue ter have der broberty ondil you vos twenty-one; den if Chelton Avenue proved ter be a square sort off a veller, I vash ter giff you der dirty t'ousand, unt destroy der vill I held, vich sdill left all der broberty ter Chelton. But, if der Chelton Avenue turned out ter pe a pad case of limberger cheese, I vas ter broduce der vill, unt der vitnasses, unt put you in Chelton Avenue's place. Dis I should haff done; put now der veller vas deadt, unt dhere vas no use ter keep der secret any longer."

"And a right good friend you have been to me, in my chequered experience, Isaacs!" Bludsoe said, grasping the Jew's hand, warmly, "and I shall not soon forget your kindness. My career for three years back has been rather a questionable one, and Jew though you are, you have indeed proven yourself an honest man, and none of my friends can I respect greater than you."

The bodies of the two suicides were viewed by the coroner, and a verdict rendered; then the new heir saw that both had a respectable interment.

Without the delay of a day, Bludsoe, Jr., or Sam Morgan, had the last will and testament of Jacob Morgan deposited with the Registrar, and testified to.

He then left his affairs in the care and trust of a safe legal firm for settlement, after which he prepared to return westward. He was now rich, and life possessed to him a charm it never had before.

Before he left the East, however, he made both Isaacs and Jack Jaunders each a handsome present, and finally persuaded both to accompany him back to the Black Hills.

They did not go to Deadwood, but to another lively little mining strike in the Golden Hills, where Bludsoe learned that the Lennoxes had gone.

He found that the Lennoxes were boarding at the only hotel in the place, and though he yearned to see Milly and press his suit, he felt that it would not be advisable to rush matters. Time works wonders; the ex-Phoenix hoped sincerely that the old saying would apply to his case.

One day, lacking amusement, he shouldered his rifle and set off into the mountains, in quest of game.

He was descending the mountain-side, on his return, when his attention was attracted by the cries of a man, who was backed against a cliff, several hundred yards below, and was defending himself with clubbed gun against the attack of a savage she-cinnamon bear, one of whose cubs the venturesome individual was evidently trying to carry off.

At a glance Bludsoe saw that the man was in imminent danger of losing his life, as he could not long fight the brawny brute, who was enraged and eager to crush its puny enemy.

And the young man also made another discovery. The endangered hunter was Mr. Lennox, the father of Milly, the old gent also having come out upon the mountain for a little sport.

But he had got more than he bargained for.

Leaping down the mountain-side with the agility of a goat, Bludsoe soon reached a position from whence he could fire at the bear. Then up came his rifle, there was a sharp report, and down went the great shaggy brute, pierced through the brain by a bullet in the left eye.

Quite dead was the bear when Bludsoe reached the cliff, where Lennox was standing,

staring alternately at his deliverer and the animal.

"Ha!" was his exclamation, as the young man came closer. "The road——"

"Once Jim Bludsoe, Jr.—now and forever hereafter Sam Morgan, an honourable man!" was the reply.

"And you shot the bear?" the miner-speculator asked, incredulously.

"I did, without the least doubt, sir."

"I fired at the brute six times, and scarcely made him wince, young man. It is strange, then, that you could kill him at one shot."

"Not strange, either, sir, for I put the bullet in the right place. How is Miss Milly, sir, may I ask?"

"Quite well, and enjoying this western life immensely. Young man, I hear through your friend, Jaunders, the detective, that you have left your wild life as a road-agent, and are living a creditable life. Also, that your financial condition has been greatly bettered, since we last met. Is this true?"

"I believe such is the case," the Phoenix replied. "I am, as I said, Sam Morgan, of Philadelphia, ready for any good work and honourable life."

"Well, then I withdraw my objections to your suit for my daughter's hand, and so go in and win if you can. Also, allow me to thank you for rescuing me from the bear." And extending his hand, he shook that of Sam warmly.

And Jim Bludsoe, Jr., paid his lady-love a visit, which was mutually pleasant, and when the Boy Phoenix next met J. Jaunders, he gave him a brotherly hug for "breaking the path for him." Otherwise, it might have been months before the two loving hearts would have come together.

And there was a wedding soon. Isaacs was present, and so was Jack, and naturally there was "a time."

The people of Deadwood often wondered at the sudden disappearance of Jim Bludsoe, Jr., but not one of the sharpest-eyed among them ever surmised that handsome and free-hearted Sam Morgan had ever borne a dreaded name. Sam now is a thriving banker in a young mining metropolis, with his father-in-law as partner and manager, and a fine firm they make—while Milly is quite the queen of the city, beautiful, good and wise.

THE END

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